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## **Project title:**

### **Active Older People Participating in Creative Dance - challenging perceptions**

A project submitted to Middlesex University in partial  
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Professional Studies

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DPS 5360

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**Disclaimer:**

The views expressed in this document are mine and are not necessarily the views of my supervisory team, examiners or Middlesex University.

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<sup>1</sup> An innovation charity that helps people and organisations bring ideas to life.

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## Summary

This case-study research report explores “active older people participating in creative dance”, implications and benefits for individuals and society and ways people from different work sectors, organisations and academic disciplines can work together. The research period March 2011 – 2016 includes social/political contexts where financial recession, demographic change and the ageing population require new solutions to meet local and national challenges. The research’s four phases involve new work and research with increasing reflexivity between them benefitting practice and informing the research. There are three aspects of inquiry: older people who have chosen to dance at this stage of their lives, my work practice and desk-top research including social gerontology, dance, community development, boundary-spanning, image, connectedness and spirituality. The research adapts overtime, benefitting from my varied positionalities as an older person and dancer having access to others choosing to dance, using skills and expertise from my previous teaching and management careers and voluntary work to new evolving work activities. This includes founding/managing a local grassroots older people’s creative dance organisation, performing dance, local and national networking and advising. The research includes conversations with some dance-providers and decision-makers in addition to in-depth phenomenological conversational interviews with eleven non-professional older dancers. Examples of the older dancers’ narratives bring new insights and vibrancy to the research. Their texts were carefully transcribed, then using NVIVO 10 software, analysed and interpreted. Emerging topics interweave with other data and evidence from literature and new reports, autoethnography, observations and live evidence from work activities. Self-designed models, tools and matrices give the research underpinning structures and ways to analyse, interpret and synthesise the different data. The research becomes an analytical, reflexive, creative “dancing-journey”.

Topics emerge from themes involving individuals, active older people, dance, especially creative dance, participation, images and challenging perceptions. It increasingly becomes multidisciplinary with transdisciplinarity (Gibbs & Maguire 2015; Nicolescu, 2008). The results include fifteen findings and ten recommendations. Relevant terminology for those aged 50-105+ years is lacking, and they are not one cohort but individuals and groups with different life-styles and needs. Ageism needs to be actively challenged. “Active older people’s creative dance” is becoming mainstream and more dance choices need to be available. Decision/policy makers need to consider dance activities seriously because dance contributes to many older people becoming involved in arts, leisure and cultural activities and having better health and wellbeing in later life. Collaboration between different factions of the dance world will give dance more recognition and a stronger voice. More age-friendly environments are needed with dance being available for all who want to participate. Grass-roots organisations and independent dance-artists/facilitators require support and resources. Boundary-spanning and joined-up thinking across organisations encourages new solutions to be found to meet some 21<sup>st</sup> century issues. Dance challenges perceptions about ageing, contributing to understanding, connectedness and spirituality and brings people together.

This work-based research makes a timely contribution, bringing together older people’s voices, work-based practice, theory and learning to create new knowledge that can inform future research and practice, whether large or small scale.

## Preface

### 1. “When I’m 64”

“When I’m 64” was a Beatles’ love song conveying humorously ways young people imagined life when they were older.

“You will be knitting by the fireside, Sunday morning go for a ride  
Doing the garden, digging the weeds  
Who could ask for more?

...Yours sincerely wasting away

...Will you still need me; will you still feed me, when I’m 64?”

McCartney (1967)

Those young people are now around 64 years old. This report explores some ideas expressed in the song and whether older people’s realities are now changing.

### 2. Returning to dance 2008 to 2009

I left fulltime work in 2008, there was little creative/contemporary dance for older adults on offer. I wanted to dance again and was unaware how to proceed. I contacted Trinity Laban Conservatoire, a London contemporary dance establishment, to seek advice.

*“I went to the Laban Art of Movement Studios in 1966-68. I would love to join a dance group and wonder whether you...run, older people dance projects. I don’t want a general beginners’ class...I am not a beginner. I am not a young dancer...so don’t think I should attend your higher level general classes....”*

*(Email Dec 2008)*

The reply stated they had nothing to offer and suggested contacting Sadler’s Wells who ran outreach classes.

Sadler's Wells responded immediately saying they offered two outreach ballet classes in partnership with Age Concern Islington, for those with some dance experience aiming to improve fitness levels for over 55s to enjoy the benefits of more active lifestyles. They also held a weekly friendly over 60s arts club ...including.... talks and tea dances... (email: 10/12/2008)

I did not follow-up Sadler's Wells suggestions. Panic struck, I felt pushed into an "old, in-need" category. I now recognise I had internalised stereotypical images concerning the sessions, especially "in partnership with Age Concern". Age Concern's image in 2008 was lobbying for the elderly. In 2009, it merged with Help the Aged to become Age UK<sup>2</sup>, revitalising their aims and image.

I did not attend the Sadler's Wells arts club because "tea dances" reinforced my negative image that participants were an older generation and I was looking for dance sessions not an arts social club.

I joined a commercial gym offering over 50s aerobic dance sessions. The instructor and participants were friendly but sessions were repetitive exercise sequences to music. I became bored after a few sessions and left.

In June 2009, BBC TV "Imagine" Arts Programme broadcast a documentary about "The Company of Elders"; Sadler's Wells' long established resident over-60s dance company. I attended a complementary taster workshop held at Sadler's Wells. It was challenging and enjoyable and many participants, including myself, stayed afterwards to express interest. An article in *Animated*, the Community Dance Magazine (Autumn 2009), written by Fiona Ross, Director of Creative Learning at Sadlers Wells recounted the interest following the programme and workshop.

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<sup>2</sup> The country's largest charity dedicated to helping everyone make the most of later life. Launched in 2009, bringing together Help the Aged and Age Concern. It produces research supports initiatives and lobbies on concerns about ageing

*“I was...held to ransom by a group...demanding to know when Sadler's Wells was going to set up more classes to accommodate their interest”*

Sadler's Wells received requests from many parts of the UK. Ross stated that the biggest challenge was responding appropriately and strategically to waves of enthusiasts. She thought the demand demonstrated the disappointing levels of visibility of UK community dance and the lack of awareness about quality dance opportunities available. She suggested Community Dance needed more promotion. However, this report will show little quality dance activities specifically aimed at active older people were available in 2009 and seven years on, although, there is increased demand and provision, it remains patchy.

Ross suggested although the television programme had stimulated demand, Sadler's Wells would not franchise older people's dance activities because each group would have different aims and personalities involved. However, she thought the programme's positive reception would add to the critical mass of advocacy about dancing for this cohort of people.

In 2011, the Laban Conservatoire began offering a “Retired not Tired” programme including a “Dance for Health” programme for over 60s.

*“This creative dance class combines gentle contemporary dance techniques with Pilates to improve strength, flexibility and balance. Taught by dance artists...we welcome all levels of ability and no previous experience is required. (Website 2015)*

Although Sadler's Wells and Laban Conservatoire are leading contemporary dance establishments, as can be seen from the evidence above their promotions about older people's dance emphasised health rather than artistic expression and/or performance, however as will be seen this report explores this is now changing.

# Chapter 1 Introduction

## Introduction

This research report is about a variety of work-based activities from October 2011 to January/February 2016. As can be seen in the Preface, I was not able to find dance activities that met my needs after leaving fulltime work in 2008. This led me to explore the increasing demand for older people's dance activities and reasons why other older people were seeking out dance activities. Ageing populations and longevity issues have risen up social/political agendas. (UN World Assembly on Aging 2002, 2012) (Harrop, A. and Jopling, K. 2009) (Ready for Ageing Report, House of Lords, 2013) (Sinclair (2015)

It is also about new ways of working by collaborating and networking to face new uncertainties to find political and social solutions. This report contributes to changing theories about older people. It brings together my knowledge and skills from over forty years' work experience and learning during my careers, studies and voluntary community activities This included teaching in secondary and primary schools and adult education. Administration, management and leadership for City & Guilds, an international vocational awarding organisation where I worked internally with large numbers of colleagues and externally with professionals from health, social care, community development and creative arts & crafts sectors. In voluntary capacities, I led the development of local grassroots organisations where I live in Tottenham, London, including some for families and children and the development of a Community Arts Centre. Since leaving my fulltime career, I was involved in voluntary and paid professional work, following interests at local and national levels and some of these have contributed to this research report.

There is a growing cohort of adults in their second half of life. This can be a time for mastering new experiences where there is potential for growth, love, happiness and better physical health; as well as facing realistically the challenges and losses of ageing ((Cohen, 2000; 2005). He devised a new paradigm based on longitudinal research and neuroscience which differs from traditional Western views concentrating on decline and slowing down. My research focused on "active older

people” to differentiate them from those who were frail and vulnerable. Cohen argues this stage of life has benefits, pleasures and rewards especially for those who are healthy and if sufficient resources are available. These individuals have different life-styles, life-chances, motivations and responsibilities. Often, they do not perceive themselves as “old”.

This report particularly includes people who chose to participate in dance activities, who for conciseness are called “older dancers”. However, my research was not directly about older professional dancers extending their careers (Lansley and Early 2011) or older dance teachers, but explores the social phenomenon of growing numbers of older people choosing to dance especially participating in creative/contemporary dance. The term “active older people’s creative dance” is used because this dance genre is still emerging (Trinity Laban Conservatoire Review 2010). It has not yet got agreed terminology. I use this concept for ranges of dance activities including learning choreography, improvisation and developing older dancers’ capabilities. Different facilitators will bring their preferred styles and expertise to sessions and participants will bring different experiences.

Potentially, my report has wider implications for other arts provision and issues concerning ageing and the arts, health and wellbeing. Growing numbers of adults are living longer. There are demographic changes in society and new solutions are being sought. (Cutler (2009) (Oliver & Kelly 2013) Organ, K. (2013)

My DProf programme began in October 2010 and this report includes four phases of research activities (see Chapter 4) from preparing to submit a research proposal in March 2011 to completing the research and drafting/editing the report in early 2016. It happened during increasing social, political and technological change which included a financial recession (2009 onwards) a coalition government (2010-2015) followed by a conservative government (2015 onwards)<sup>3</sup>.

My various activities provided me with access to other older people who were dancing. This was the starting point for my research. Agreed concepts and

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<sup>3</sup> This report was not influenced by any issues concerning the EU referendum or its aftermath concerning Brexit or presidential elections in USA.

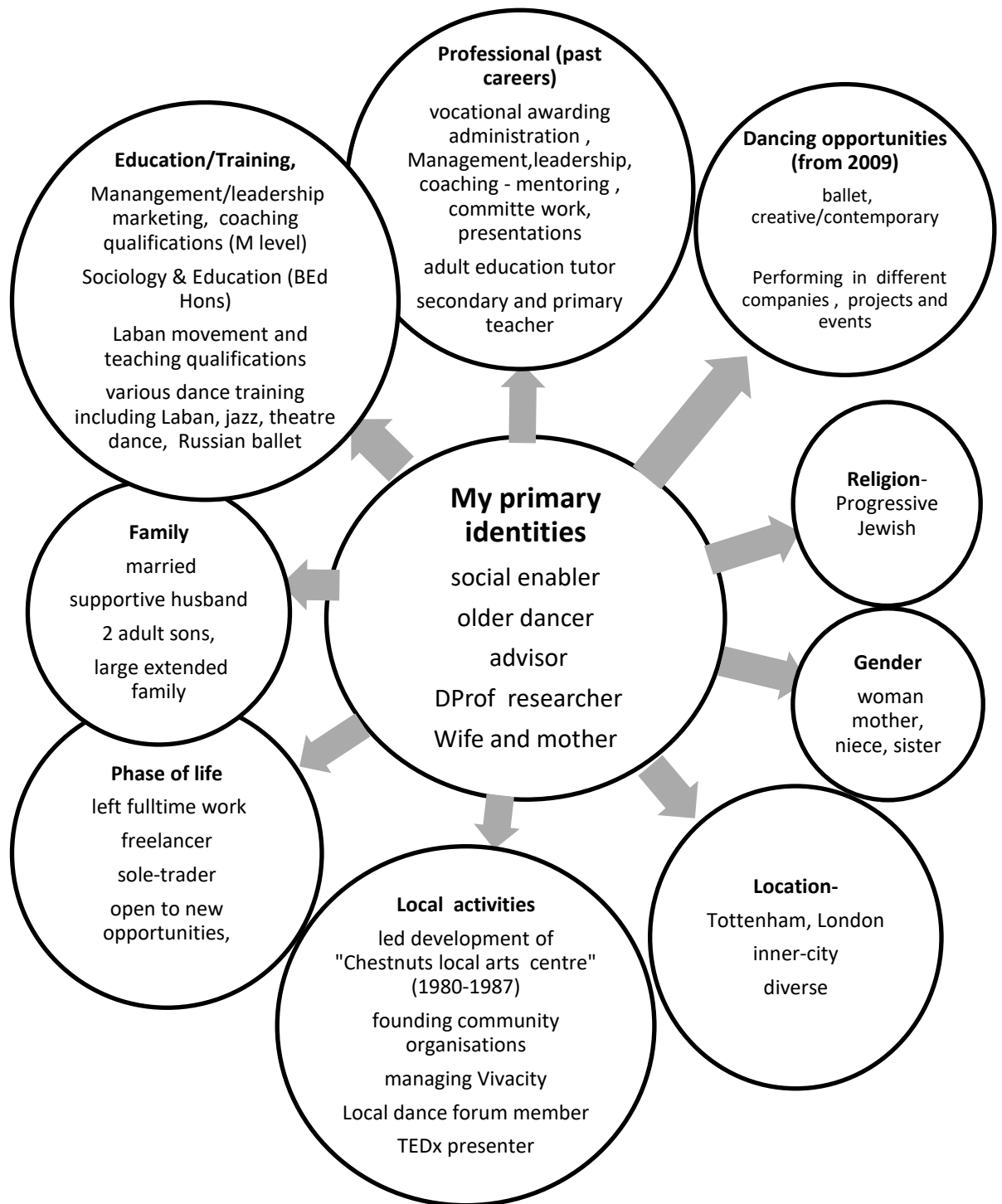


terminology were often not yet available for the direct topics I was researching. The methodological approaches adapted as work-based activities were incorporated in real time as my research and work activities progressed. Eventually, I used an exploratory case study approach (Yin 2014) (see 3.6) designing a model that pulled together the research from the older dancers' interviews, my new learning from desk-top research and new experiences from work-based research activities.

Chapter 3 gives a detailed account of ways the research methodology, design and methods adapted over time. Gradually, the later chapters emerged as I analysed, interpreted and synthesised my data enabling the recommendations to emerge and the report finishes with conclusions and ideas that can contribute towards further research activities in the future. There follows a reflection on my personal learning, professional development and contribution for dealing with complexity in work-based research. The report ends with references, bibliography and relevant appendices.

### **1.1 My Culturegram and Primary Identities**

I am personally located within my research and influenced it, whilst my learning and research influenced my work activities. This reflexivity is explored. I have my own voice and perspectives and make explicit who I am from the start. I want my research to be believable to readers (Esterberg 2002) and to give transparency about my life-world. (Schutz 1970). To assist this, Figure 1 shows my culturegram and primary identities based on a model by Chang (2008).



**Figure 1 Culturegram and Primary identities**

## 1.2 Background information

In 2011, when this research project began, my work activities and interests were

- blue-sky thinking with Stakeholder A (see 2.5)
- ad-hoc management consultancy work, film extra work;
- strategic planning with several national voluntary organisations (beyond the scope of this research report)
- founding a local community choir
- founding/managing Vivacity, (a pseudonym) (See Appendix1). a local “active older people’s creative dance” organisation in Tottenham. The first project was successfully completed, facilitated by Stakeholder 2 (see 2.5) but I was seeking future funding and so the organisation was not secure.
- Dancing in Company A (a pseudonym), a newly formed active older people’s dance company in London. (See 2.5). I also attended various ballet and creative dance sessions.

Later, I became involved in new work activities including advising, networking and other dance activities including performing (See Figure 2) including dancing in Company B.

I left my fulltime career at City & Guilds<sup>4</sup> in July 2008 where I had been a senior manager with responsibilities for leading/managing teams developing vocational qualifications in health, social care and community sectors. During my final year, I produced an internal report “Future Communities” (Richards 2008) and gave presentations to directors and staff. It was distributed to several national health and social care organisations. Some topics from the Report underpinned this research report including globalisation, demographic changes, ageing, “Age Friendly Cities”, regeneration, the importance of the voluntary sector and volunteering. “Future Communities” was not a rigorous academic report but it whetted my appetite for further higher-level study.

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<sup>4</sup> International vocational awarding organisation; my employer between 1976-1980 and 1987-2008

The report's foreword stated:

*"I am an older worker/learner preparing for the next phase of my life-cycle and one of the baby boomer generation who is about to leave fulltime employment. New opportunities and challenges!*

*To the future....."*

This showed my optimistic attitude. It demonstrates I had no intention of being marginalised or "retired".

After leaving fulltime work, I returned to dancing<sup>5</sup> and local community activities. My research includes some of my new activities as

- an older person,
- older dancer
- social enabler,
- networker and advisor
- reflective- practitioner-researcher (Fox 2007).

Having left fulltime work, I was surprised the way I was categorised in the external world. I thought I was an adult getting involved in new activities, instead found myself classified as "retired", grouped with everyone else no longer in fulltime work aged 50-110+ years<sup>6</sup>.

My personal experience of life after fulltime work was liberating, exciting, with time for different work activities and interests. I chose what I wanted to do and continued to use my professional skills and expertise in new ways. I developed my dancing capabilities, created new organisations in my neighbourhood and collaborated with others developing new friendships. These wide-ranging activities

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<sup>5</sup> Whilst working fulltime and being preoccupied with family my only dancing activities were social at a few parties and celebratory events and watching a few contemporary dance events at Sadler's Wells

<sup>6</sup> For any paid work, I was a "sole-trader" for tax purposes.

became main focuses of my research as well as interviews with some active older people who were choosing to dance.

### **1.3 Assumptions**

I was not a neutral objective observer but a reflective practitioner within my research (Schon 1983). There was not just one objective theory or hypothesis I wanted to research but many multiple understandings, stories and experiences I was positioned to explore. During my research my assumptions were challenged whilst I critically reflected on my activities. This motivated me to research further leading to transformative learning (Mezirow 1997). My assumptions were influenced during the first year of the DProf programme by experiences and new learning. When preparing my research proposal in 2011 my assumptions included

- Older adults are active and can make choices. It is recognised that older people are creative and for many their brains continue to develop throughout their lives. (Cohen 2000, 2005)
- “Retirement” is disappearing; people need to plan and organise their lives differently. (Schuller and Watson 2009)
- Creative/contemporary dance is not widely available for active older people. Most dance for older people is limited to line or ballroom dancing, joining sessions aimed at younger people, aerobic exercises or gentle dance exercise sessions.
- Dance is not just for young, agile people. (Smith 1997) There is growing interest in older people’s dance as an art-form and dance being accessible for all. (Connolly, M. and Redding, E. (2010). Dance South West for Department of Health (2011),
- Political and technological uncertainties impact on all; policy-makers are seeking alternative strategies to deal with change.
- An ageing society has financial and care implications (WHO 2002, 2007) (Walker 2002,2004) (Harrop and Jopling 2009)

## 1.4 Research questions

There were five initial questions when the research proposal was accepted, and these influenced my interviews with older dancers. These questions underpinned this aspect of my research. Stinson's et al (1990) phenomenological research on meanings young women dance students gave to their activities encouraged me to design questions for older people who were dancing regularly.

1. What experiences do active older people gain from becoming involved in creative dance?
2. What meaning do they give to their dancing?
3. How can sharing interests in similar phases of life enhance wellbeing, practice and image?
4. How can sessions be structured to create the best environment for encouraging inclusion?
5. Will widening opportunities for creative dance performance positively promote active older people's images and capabilities, changing attitudes at local, national, social, political levels and within performing arts?

My research adapted, once I began incorporating work activities (Costley et al 2010). I created a new research question with a set of sub-questions. (See 3.3) The main question was:

**“Why do active older people choose to participate in creative dance and what are the implications and benefits”.**

The questions above are identified in the introduction so readers know from the outset what my research explored and they will be returned to in Chapter 3.

## Conclusion

My report benefits from my access to active older dancers, my relevant work activities and desktop research. At another level, it is my journey as an older adult taking on new responsibilities after my fulltime career and bringing up a family. I wanted to continue learning; collaborating with others and being involved in

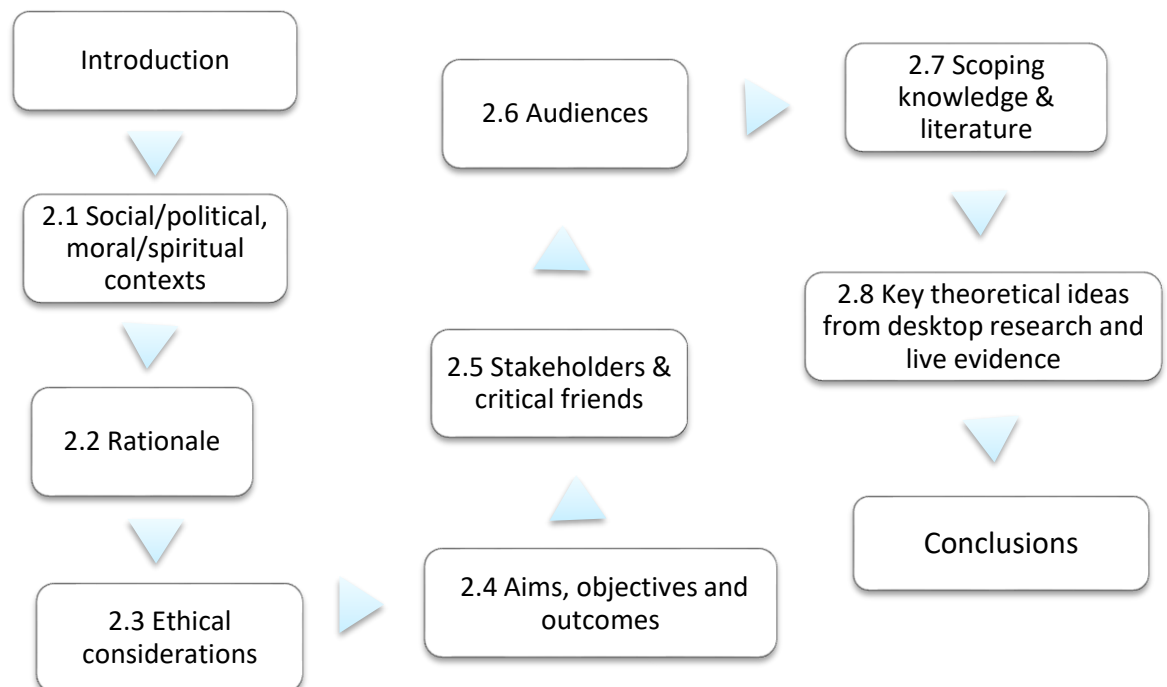
worthwhile activities. This report critically considers the development of my capabilities, my varied work; my progression as a researcher learning and participating in a DProf programme and my dancing experiences. It has many of the features of a choreographed dance and so is a “dancing-journey”.

This chapter has given background information about who I am, my interests, previous work activities and my assumptions. The main questions and the exploratory case study approach have been identified. The next chapter gives the context and further boundaries for the research.

## Chapter 2 Context and Boundaries

### Introduction

This chapter gives context and boundaries for my dancing-journey, drawing on some academic literature and evidence underpinning my research. I used experiences and research from others and alternative perspectives as well as my own (Yin 2014).



### 2.1 Social, political, moral/spiritual contexts

The UN International Plan of Action on Ageing and Political Declaration adopted, at the Madrid Second World Assembly on Ageing (2002), included key challenges concerning issues for “Building a Society for All Ages in the 21st-century”. There were three priority themes concerning attitudes, policies and practices to fulfil the enormous potential of ageing in the twenty-first century. These priorities were

- older persons and development;
- advancing health and well-being into old age
- supportive environments.



In 2012, The Third World Assembly on Ageing “Ensuring a society for all ages” promoted quality of life, active ageing and solidarity between generations. UNFPA (2012) called for new approaches on ways societies’ workforces, social and intergenerational relations were structured and sustained. This would require political commitment, strong data and knowledge bases so that global ageing could be integrated within developmental processes. It argued people everywhere needed to age with dignity and security, enjoying life with full human rights and fundamental freedoms. The report recognised this was challenging but necessary in an ageing world.

Harrop and Jopling (2009: 6-7) reported

- 52% of older people agree that planning services do not pay enough attention to older people’s needs
- 68% of older people agree politicians see older people as a low priority.
- 76% of older people believe the country fails to make good use of older people’s skills and talents

The default retirement age in the UK was fully abolished in April 2011. Women’s state pension age began increasing from 2010 (direct.gov 2011).

The “Ready for Ageing?” report (House of Lords 2013) using ONS statistics for England, projected that by 2035 compared to 2010 there will be

- 51% more people aged 65 and over
- 101% more people aged 85 and over. (ONS 2010 based on Statistical Bulletin October 2011).

The population is projected to increase to 67.2 million by 2020 and will continue to grow. This increase is equivalent to an average annual rate of growth of 0.8 per cent. If past trends continue, the population will reach 73.2 million by 2035. This is due to natural increase (more births than deaths) and because it is assumed there will be more immigrants than emigrants (a net inward flow of migrants). The population is projected to continue ageing with the average (median) age rising from 39.7 years in 2010 to 39.9 years in 2020 and 42.2 years by 2035. (NOS National Population-Based Projections, 2010)

Ledwith (2011) argues we are living during times when multinational

conglomerates wield power. Social concerns may become expendable if they contradict market needs. She warns the wealthiest are protected and benefit but most people suffer consequences from new policies. She argues there are escalating world crises and an unprecedented period of change in world history. She suggests community development begins at the level of local peoples' everyday lives because it is possible to contribute and achieve positive results. Illingworth (2012) makes a strong case for social capital to include a moral dimension. She argues the planet's future depends on global citizenship where people have rights and duties going beyond personal and national self-interest. This involves humanity and consideration for the planet<sup>7</sup>. She suggests a shift from self-interest to being in networks; connecting with others for social good because social ties are important for happiness and wellbeing benefitting people themselves and others at local and transnational levels. This gives meaning and purpose to people's lives.

In August 2011, a riot took place in Tottenham and this unrest spread to other UK cities. The member of Parliament for Tottenham, London UK (Lammy 2011), argued these riots were not only about poverty and social difficulties but also politics and society's ills. It was wrong to live in a society where banks are too big to fail, so are supported, but whole communities are allowed to sink. This complements the theories of Ledwich (2011) and Illingworth (2012) above. Following the unrest in Tottenham there has been extensive regeneration and investment strategic planning (Haringey Council 2014) This 20 years' strategy aims to enable Tottenham to become an attractive place to live, work and invest.

King (2009) addresses similar issues from a spirituality perspective. She gives insights into the global quest for meaning and fulfilment. There is growing awareness that we are living on a planet where there is still suffering and violence. Since 2009, there have not been sustainable peaceful solutions to recent wars and conflicts. She suggests different forms of spirituality and solutions need exploring whether secular, religious, humanistic, scientific, or artistic and these complement Nicolescu's theories (See 3.2) about transdisciplinarity and "spiritual culture". King

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<sup>7</sup> Examples during the research period include refugees and asylum seekers migration from poverty, conflicts and poverty and climate change

argues human beings yearn for meaning and significance in their lives beyond material goods, consumerism and exploitative capitalism.

Sachs (2007) states that

*“There is a role for everybody and every community, and a need for everybody to become engaged ... all must be the peacemakers....”*

He encouraged everyone not to lose heart <sup>8</sup>.

This section contributes a spiritual, moral, philosophical dimension on issues facing the planet at a time of increasing technological change and increased globalisation. Human beings' relationships can be exploited or enhanced and this can lead to more violence and fear or meaning and purpose for individuals, communities and nations at international, national and local level. It so happened London's violence in 2011 began in my neighbourhood as I was preparing my proposal. Some local people became involved in regeneration consultations and initiatives. I became involved so could use these experiences as illustrations. Democratic freedoms, the ways resources are distributed, human rights and quests for peace, health and wellbeing are necessary to enable everyone to strive for positive lives in the future. Issues such as the ageing population and increased longevity and use of resources need to be addressed but there can be dignity, respect, shared enjoyment and solidarity between the generations. These are important themes that underpinned my report and work activities and leads on to the rationale for the dancing-journey and the purpose and more contexts for my research.

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<sup>8</sup> This became increasingly relevant during the last stages of writing my report. Politicians have not adequately addressed issues that morally face humanity. These issues are beyond this research's boundaries but include refugees fleeing conflict, wars in the Middle East and famines. These are indicative of the importance of the theories of Ledwith, Illingworth, Sachs, King and Nicolescu.

## **2.2 Rationale**

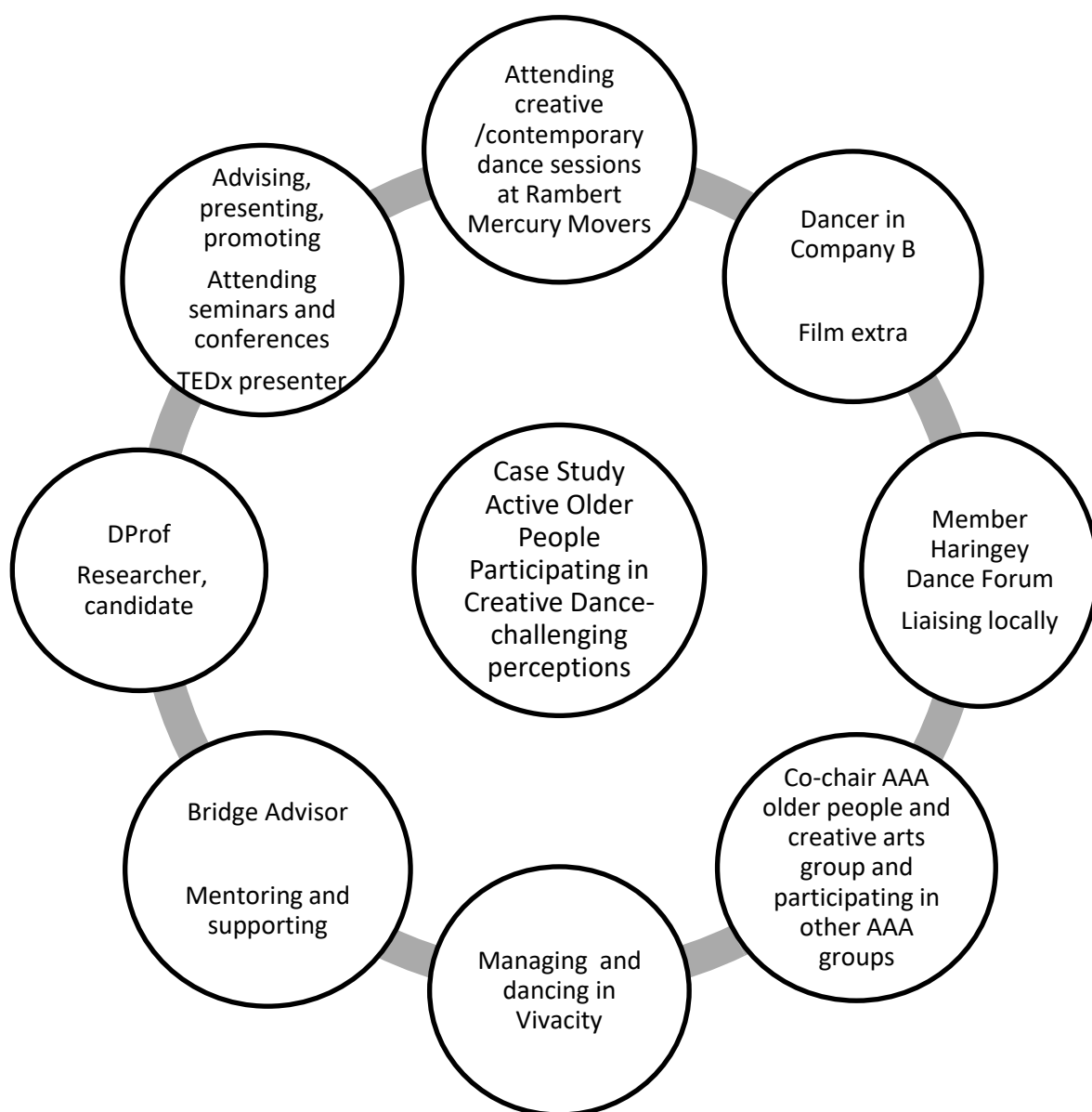
My research contributes towards new knowledge about

- choices and aspirations of a growing cohort of older adults
- “active older people’s creative dance”
- collaborating, networking and advising on different work activities to find new ways of working together to address issues and find new solutions at times of change
- challenging perceptions of who can dance and their place in communities

My original intention was to involve myself in work-based academic doctoral study, using past and new experiences. I wanted to learn, explore and understand ways to utilise my work, life skills and knowledge in new ways. I had freedom to make choices and follow interests. Fortunately, I had good health, energy, time and a sufficient pension. I wanted to make positive contributions, enjoy life, share ideas and create new opportunities for other people and myself.

My research adapted to meet my changing circumstances. Some earlier work could not continue some work was beyond the scope of my research and other work emerged during the research process. (See Chapter 4)

Figure 2 shows the variety of work activities included in my research from 2014. My methodology had adapted to become a case study taking account of the changes.



**Figure 2** Main work activities from 2014 when my project became a case study

This work clustered into

- managing Vivacity, a grass roots organisation I founded in 2010 so that older people living-in-and-around Tottenham had opportunities to participate in creative dance activities facilitated by a dance-artist, and dance with neighbours from different backgrounds in a dance studio. I used my leadership, enabling, welcoming, administrative and management skills
- dancing and performing

- advising, mentoring, networking at local and national levels
- promoting, championing, informing, presenting, writing and sharing ideas
- work-based practitioner-researcher activities

### **2.3 Ethical considerations**

This section complements my culturegram (Figure 1) and research ethical considerations (see 3.7). My work practice and research activities were influenced by my teaching, leadership and coaching professionalism based on integrity, honesty, autonomy and respect. Lunt (2008) suggests ethically responsible professionals rarely refer to religious or professional codes though they act in ways that accord and go beyond them. As a mature, professional woman, I do not usually refer directly to my personal religious and professional codes when working with others. They are implicit, influencing how I think, feel, behave and relate to others. Making explicit my beliefs and values for this report was, therefore, challenging.

I was an insider researcher because some of my research topics and activities involved where I have lived for many years and returning to dance and community activities. But I was also an outsider researcher, a person from a minority group living in an area with people from many different cultural and social backgrounds. I was entering new or returning to work activities in different settings from my fulltime careers and they were unfamiliar to me. Warnock's (1998) humanistic ethical stance including defending human rights, seeking peace and justice acknowledging the dignity of all humanity and respecting diversity, complements my Liberal Jewish ethics of social justice, love, compassion, forgiveness and striving to heal the world<sup>9</sup>. (Raynor 2005). I share my expertise, knowledge and collaborate and support others enabling them to enhance their lives in their own ways and I listen and learn from them. I take a reflective approach and learn from mistakes and successes and I have a positive attitude and question and do not take life for granted.

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<sup>9</sup> Tikkun Olam "healing the world" and universal values are fundamental to Liberal Judaism

## **2.4 Aims, objectives and outcomes**

Table 1 was created in 2014 when my research design adapted to become a case study (see 4.3) and my work activities and methodological approaches were explicit. It created an underpinning framework for aims and objectives and could also be used as an evaluation tool to see how well goals/outcomes were being achieved. It was based on an earlier version originally created for the research proposal in 2011.

Aims	Objectives	Proposed Goals/Outcomes
1. Produce an exploratory case study report using a range of qualitative research methods	<p>Interview active older dancers and leading dance provider/practitioners,</p> <p>Use work and dancing experiences</p> <p>Research relevant literature and other evidence</p> <p>Design an exploratory case study</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploratory case study report written that meets university requirements and level 8 descriptors</li> </ul>
2. Inform and influence decision/policy makers, dance providers/practitioners and others interested in the research topics	<p>Inform and influence by collaborating and becoming involved in different activities</p> <p>Make a distinctive contribution about active older people participating in creative dance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Findings/recommendations based on experience and knowledge and useful to audiences</li> <li>• Examples of working with others, encouraging more arts, health and wellbeing and community inclusion</li> </ul>
3. Challenge perceptions of older people and intergenerational activities	Identify present perceptions and explore ways to challenge stereotypes and ageism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examples where perceptions were challenged</li> <li>• Examples where dance enabled older people to contribute to changing attitudes.</li> </ul>



Aims	Objectives	Proposed Goals/Outcomes
<p>4. Become involved in dancing activities, boundary spanning and the DProf programme</p>	<p>Manage Vivacity and gain funding.</p> <p>Participate in dance performances, increase dance capability.</p> <p>Use professional skills and life-experience for new work.</p> <p>Complete DProf based upon new work activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vivacity developed successfully</li> <li>• Influenced change at local/national levels</li> <li>• Used critical analysis, reflection and reflexive work practice.</li> <li>• Confidence, authority and professional expertise. Made contributions influencing choices and opportunities for older people especially in creative arts and dance</li> </ul>

**Table 1 Case Study Aims, Objectives, proposed Goals/Outcomes**

## **2.5 Stakeholders and critical friends**

Initially, two stakeholders supported my project. They recognised it informed their work activities. I appreciated their interest and encouragement. One remained throughout the project.

### **Stakeholder A**

He was a senior colleague at City & Guilds who founded Bridge Research (Bridge)<sup>10</sup> in 2005. He invited me to become a Bridge advisor. In 2012, both of us no longer had time to take work forward together. We agreed his role would change to a critical friend and he continued to encourage me and I benefitted from his visionary approach.

### **Stakeholder B**

She was my dance teacher from 2009 until 2013. She was dance director of Company A, taking ownership in 2012. I danced in Company A from its initiation in 2010 until 2013. I contracted her to facilitate Vivacity's sessions from 2010-2012 and she and I worked successfully together and shared ideas. I introduced her to Stakeholder A and the three of us considered potential joint-working. I appreciated her talents as a teacher and the dance opportunities she gave me. She had ideas about older people's dance and I shared my research as it progressed until summer of 2013 when the relationship ended.

### **Critical Friends**

Some critical friends supported me throughout my dancing-journey. They were interested, patient kept me motivated and I appreciated their encouragement, learned from them. These included some peers I was dancing with, ex-work colleagues and my university "buddies".

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<sup>10</sup> Bridge Research is a not-for-profit organisation specialising in cross-sector initiatives, mainly EU projects about mental health including promoting opportunities for older and vulnerable people. Stakeholder A is a director and founded the organisation. I am an advisor.

## 2.6 Audiences

The audiences for this report are

- Institute of Work-Based Learning assessment board
- Decision/policy makers, academic researchers, dance providers/practitioners
- People interested in ageing, “active older people’s creative dance” and/or intergenerational dance or other ways to create vibrant communities through arts and interests

## 2.7 Scoping knowledge and literature

I took forward knowledge and experience from my past employment role including higher-level work-based qualifications in Leadership and management<sup>11</sup>, marketing<sup>12</sup> and coaching-mentoring<sup>13</sup>. At work, there were opportunities to dialogue, share ideas to come to new understandings adapting to find new ways for doing things within our organisation. (Senge 1990). I brought these skills and knowledge forward to my new work activities and research.

I scoped various topics in the “Future Communities” Report (see 1.2). I chaired a EU project “Older People Active Learners” (OPAL) from 2004-2006 working with European partners on ways older people could make choices and plan their futures, using IT modules and participating in intergenerational activities. I created a website following an OPAL presentation Stakeholder A and I gave at an Association for Education and Ageing (AEA) conference (2009).

<http://olderpeoplechoices.yolasite.com/opal-project.php>

This had direct relevance to my DProf project because it included topics concerning older people having choices, learning new skills and intergenerational activities.

My dance knowledge included studying Laban principles and ways they could be taught. I had general knowledge about dance history and styles, but knew nothing

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<sup>11</sup> Winning a national ILM Lord Oxfuird award (2002) for Excellence having gained a leadership and management vocational qualification.

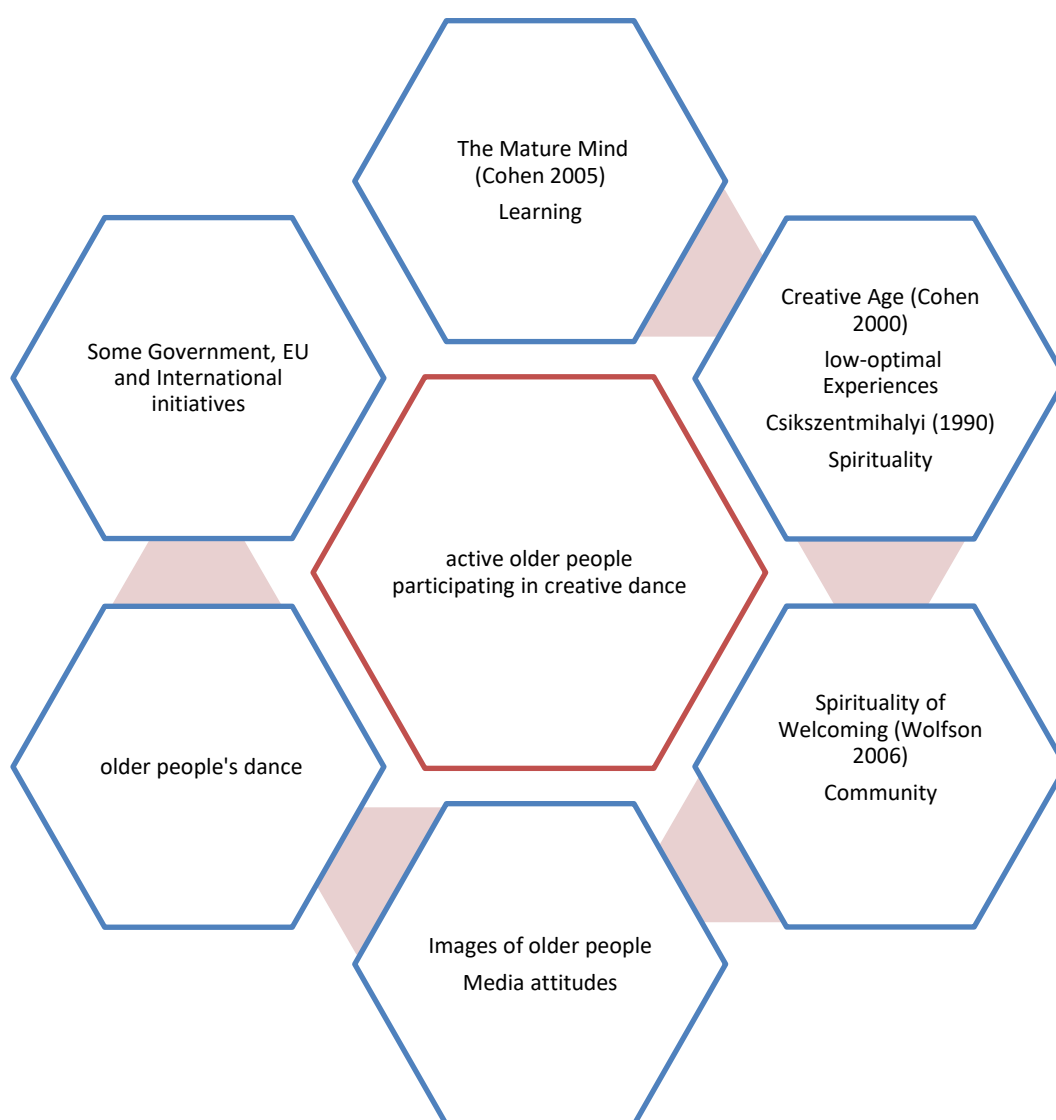
<sup>12</sup> Chartered Institute of Marketing professional qualification (2002)

<sup>13</sup> Advanced Diploma in Coaching and Mentoring (M Level distinction) (OCM/Oxford Brookes University 2004)

about dance from 1970s onwards and little about relevant and current dance theory and/or practice. My early teaching qualifications included educational philosophy, psychology and sociology, especially phenomenology.

During the research period, I entered new social/political arenas, leaving behind my previous fulltime career. From choice, I returned to dance and community activities that I had not participated in for over twenty years

When preparing my proposal, key word searches using google scholar and library searches through Athens included



**Figure 3** Initial Topics

I found there was scant literature on my actual research topic. Creative dance was about children and professional performance/choreography. Research about older people and dance included topics such as effects on balance (McKinley et al 2008); ways dance exercise prevents falling (Wallman et al 2009) (Verghese 2006); ballroom dancing and social and cultural identity (Lima and Viera 2007); dance preventing dementia (Verghese 2003). There was little about active older adults participating in creative/contemporary dance as an expressive, enjoyable normal experience.

My research design at this stage was based upon a mixed-methodological approach (Creswell and Clark 2011). I wanted to include research from my work-based activity when it became possible. I needed to scope knowledge, explore and gain new understandings, adapting my thoughts and practice. My accepted research project title in March 2012 was:

***“When I’m 64 I want to dance! Active older people participating in creative dance”***

## **2.8 Some key theoretical ideas from desk-top research**

### **Introduction**

In this section, some key literature and theoretical ideas give context to my research. It complements sections 2.1 and 2.7. and covers the four main themes of the report

- Active older people
- Dance
- Participating
- Challenging perceptions

### **2.8.1 Active older people**

This theme includes

- Age, life-course and ageism
- Ageing, health and dance

#### **Age, life-course and ageism**

Cohen's theories (2000, 2005) on creativity during the second half of life and the mature mind were initial core texts for my research, providing an inspiring backdrop to my case study (See F1) His paradigm explored in Chapters 3 and 4 of "The Mature Mind" positively reframes the second stage of life into a set of four developmental stages: "midlife re-evaluation", "liberation", "summing up", and "encore". He suggests older people can continue contributing, leading fulfilled lives for many years, providing they have reasonable health and resources. He is cautionary, emphasising the need for realism. He reports on a "Creativity and Aging Study" 2000–2007, that examined the influence professionally-led participatory art programmes had on older people's social activities, general and mental health. The results showed the effects of community-based art programmes. There was positive change, growth and creative expression that can continue throughout life. He suggests an inner drive fosters psychological growth where each phase creates an "inner climate". This allows for re-evaluating life, experimenting with new strategies and life's gifts can be appreciated with age and experience. There is potential for growth, love and happiness. The challenges of ageing such as loss and bereavements need to be recognised but these are not the whole truth. Science and western societies have previously emphasised negatives including decline and pathology and he argues it was time to celebrate life's benefits, pleasures and rewards as well. Cohen's work incorporated new findings from neuroscience.

Walker (2002) describes ways social aspects of ageing grew from sociology in the 1940s/1950s which emphasised functionalist topics such as adjustments to retirement, widowhood and decline. He suggests the concept of "active ageing" went back to the 1960s with the identification of "successful ageing". He points out "successful ageing" was criticised for being idealistic, placing unrealistic expectations on individuals to maintain activity levels until advanced age, ignoring

physical limitations and social structures such as forced retirement. Similar criticisms were made by Stowe and Cooney (2014) suggesting “successful ageing” was a static model that neglected historical cultural contexts, social relationships, and structural forces that influence later-life.

Walker (2002) continues that from 1970s free-market economic theories influenced expectations and encouraged individuality. Policy makers became concerned about rising pensions and healthcare costs. They were keen to extend productivity. A conference was held (G-8 Governmental Conference and symposium, Japan, 1997) to develop further the policy implications of “active ageing”, a term referring to ideas about remaining active as we age by working longer, retiring later, engaging in voluntary work after retirement and practicing healthy ageing life styles. It had been introduced at the Denver summit in June 1997 as an umbrella title for a range of adjustments to accommodate the challenges from ageing. This emerging concept combined core elements of productive ageing strongly emphasising the quality of life and physical and mental wellbeing.

The World Health Organisation (WHO 2001) considered older people’s “active ageing”. This was concerned with health, independence and productivity. Following the Madrid conference (WHO 2002), the policy framework on “active ageing” included sections on globalisation, the effects and challenges of ageing populations and identified determinants of active ageing. Walker (2002) devised a strategy for active ageing, linking policies, employment, pensions, retirement, health and citizenship. This strategy was intended to enable industrialised countries to respond to the 21<sup>st</sup> century’s challenges of ageing. It included ways active ageing might function during different stages of life. He considered his strategy was morally correct and made economic sense, arguing that as everyone ages, it would prevent intergenerational conflicts and create a fairer, inclusive society that responded to the economic challenges of ageing and would extend employment. The strategy shifted the focus away from “old people” to “all of us”. The interests of citizens, government, and institutions were brought together. He conceded his strategy could become coercive as “active ageing” could be used by decision-makers to postpone paying pensions and getting cheap labour from volunteers. However, he suggested social and economic benefits would ensure

these risks would not happen. These theories developed prior to the global financial recession. Increasingly, there is more inequality and a growing expectation that older people will contribute their skills voluntarily without payment. Some people will remain in work to supplement their pensions because there were changes to pension rights so more people will work longer.

The New Dynamics of Ageing (NDA) research programme (NDA, undated), directed by Professor Walker, was an eight-year multidisciplinary research initiative which aimed to improve the quality of life of older people. It was a unique collaboration between five UK research councils and the largest research programme on ageing ever mounted in the UK. Various research outcomes from the NDA programme were summarised in a handbook (Harding 2015) as a guide for organisations and for older people themselves to lobby, campaign and put ideas into practice. When questioned about the important challenges, Walker (2015) states that demographic change is challenging and political-will is required to respond successfully to it. Neo-liberalism favours free trade, privatisation, and minimal government intervention in business and reduced public expenditure on social services. When this is coupled with individualism they have the power to destroy collective institutions such as the welfare state. He contends such individualism denies the sociological truth that social beings find their identities from interaction and recognition from others. Neo-liberalism promotes inequality and damages society economically and socially. Ledwith, Illingsworth and King argued from their different academic disciplines for more equality and social empathy so individuals can lead meaningful lives. They, like Walker, show concern about neo-liberalism individualism and inequality having negative effects on individuals and society. Connectedness and gaining recognition from others encourages and benefits from positive community development.

Phillipson (1998, 2013) suggests social factors influences ways ageing is understood. Age is socially constructed. There needs to be theoretical perspectives that understand the challenges facing older people and the societies they live in. Issues such as changing relationships, the role of family, globalisation and medicalising ageing processes are influential. New insecurities and anxieties associated with growing old continue. He considers it is timely to consider the impacts of demographic change and the complications of managing and



organising future social and economic activity as well as valuing the benefits of ageing. He identifies demographic projections, such as those shown in (2.1) coincided with crises in confidence within institutions following the 2008 financial crash then recession, falls in fertility rates and new perceptions of the consequences of ageing. He suggests there needs to be radical thinking about social life and supporting organisations, rather than looking at ageing just from a public accounting perspective. Older people can inform and change institutions, and vice versa.

Gullette (2011) coming from a feminist theoretical perspective, agrees with Phillipson and Walker, arguing that premature decline is not caused by biology but depends on social contexts. She suggests “baby boomers” were supposed to be economically better off and healthier than previous generations but they are being

*“shoved headlong into this perilous time”. (Gullette p5)*

She considers ageing is a narrative where each person has physiology, personal life experiences and societal influences that affect their stories.

*‘Terms have crept into vocabulary like “deadwood” and “burden” whereas in previous generations “elders” used to go with “betters’ (p5).*

She argues English has an inadequate vocabulary for discussing age. It is a learned set of beliefs and practices preventing people from functioning in optimal ways in relation to their ageing and their bodies. It interrelates with class, race, physical ability, sexual preference and gender. She suggests ageism is the next taboo to address in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the same way sexism; racism; homophobia and ableism were in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many people think ageing is just a bodily experience without any history or environmental influences. Decline ideology infiltrates society, affecting psychological wellbeing, public health, intergenerational harmony, happiness and employment. She suggests anger and hope are justified and suggests that “Ageism consciousness-raising” (p14) needs to counteract the culture of youth and fatalism of old age. Culture, commercial, political, economic and medical systems need confronting because they influence who is “old”. This complements Phillipson’s and Walker’s theories.

Habermas's critical theory (Thomassen 2010) gives a philosophical-sociological perspective, considering language and power relationships. Habermas argues that communication is the way individuals create their own life-worlds but as power is not equal throughout society, systematic thinking can dominate and mask social control. Techno-scientific society controls how it functions, what counts as social problems and what is truth. People must become critical of contemporary society and dialogue so that language and communication that defines us as human beings eradicates oppression, making way for people to lead better lives, enabling better societies to emerge.

The UN "Ageing in the Twenty-First Century," (2012) reported on celebrating and meeting the challenge of ageing. It analysed the situation to establish progress since the World Assembly (2002). The report recognises complex solutions need a mixed-methodology approach. It considers its research to be "unique" emphasising the importance of older people's voices and focussing on older people themselves. This shows that, at international level, it is being recognised that individuals' narratives and qualitative research are necessary to illuminate and complement large-scale quantitative research. The report emphasises collaboration and bringing different older people's voices and expertise together.

"The World Report on Ageing and Health" (WHO 2015) suggests there needs to be a fundamental shift in societal thinking about ageing and older people, ensuring extra years are healthy, meaningful and dignified. This will be better for older people and society. The report confirmed that healthier people experiencing longer lives usually come from more-advantaged backgrounds whilst people from disadvantaged backgrounds and/or poorer countries are more likely to have poorest health and greatest need. It suggests "healthy ageing" is about individuals doing things they value for as long as possible. This can be encouraged by

- creating age-friendly environments
- aligning medicine and health systems in new ways so older people's needs are met
- long-term care systems available for those needing them. This also supports carers, who are usually women, so they are freer to play broader roles in society.

The report recognises each person's individuality. There are two types of influences affecting health in older age.

**Individual influences** - genes, behaviour/life style, disease, chronic illness and ways individuals' bodies change.

**Environmental influences** – housing; assistive technology; social facilities, access to resources and transport.

Minichiello's (2000) researched meanings and experiences of ageism showing that "active ageing" as widely applied in academic social analysis is understood differently by older people themselves. Older people spoke freely about negative experiences "being seen as old" and "being treated as old". They viewed "active ageing" as a positive way of presenting and interpreting themselves which separated themselves from the "old" group. This is a tension within my research and my own personal experience. Minichiello's interviewees recognised that older people often receive negative treatment or are disadvantaged but they did not consider they were "old". Few experienced brutal ageism themselves. They thought everyday life did involve some negative treatment, occasional positive 'ageism', and being aware of vulnerabilities. Health professionals were a major source of ageist treatment (see example, Appendix 12). Some older people limited their lives by internalising ageism whilst others actively negotiated new images of ageing and the way they and others would age in the future.

Green's (2010) life-course approach uses interdisciplinary perspectives especially sociology and psychology. Her "middle adulthood" category (middle age or midlife including some baby-boomers) complements Cohen's mid-evaluation phase. Her "old age" is a single stage. She suggests in post-industrial societies chronologically this is from 60-120 years. There are transitions and physical characteristics that feed negative stereotypes; medical and biological perspectives led to geriatrics concentrating on pathologies, decline and dependency. She is still describing life after middle adulthood as one cohort called "old age", despite its diversity and variations.

This sub-theme demonstrated that ageing is a natural life process, experienced in different ways. Older people are not a single cohort. Ageing is not just a bodily process, but also a social construct. There is inequality of power in techno-

scientific society. What counts as problems in society and how resources are used leads to inequalities and ways individuals and cohorts of people are valued. This is reflected in language and opportunities that are available. Culture, commercial, political, economic and medical systems are addressing the challenges of ageing populations and people living longer and confronting the culture of youth and fatalism of old age. There is still a lot more that needs to be achieved and this includes involving older people and hearing their narratives as well as the need for more large-scale research.

### **Ageing, health and dance**

Lievesley and Midwinter's (CPA 2013) report underpins many issues explored in my case study. Its intention was to inform a wide range of policy makers, commissioners, health and care professionals and lay people. It was based on different research reviews carried out during 2011-2012 and includes a section on dancing. It concludes prevention strategies can improve the health and wellbeing of older/late life populations. The final paragraph is optimistic but pragmatic

*"In the face of what looks like an overwhelming avalanche of problematic issues, one might be tempted to put it all down to fate and assume that nothing really can be done. These are organic matters, susceptible to change if individuals and communities and public authorities are willing to take heart and act. It is a time to do as much as we can." (P90)*

This report suggests older people need to make choices and express their needs. Society can provide acceptable provision and services. Simultaneously, these can influence choices older people adopt so encouraging healthier lifestyles. This prevention strategy builds on an outline in the Public Health white paper 'Healthy Lives, Healthy People' (2010) which suggests health service reform requires better co-ordination between health and social care provision (which is beyond the scope of my case study) and at local level, public health and prevention (which can include dance so is relevant to my research).

Two relevant research studies included Verghese (2003) who compared the results of older people doing leisure activities and the risk of dementia in later life.

Boseley (2015) reported on a research study led by Prof Kivipelto in Finland (Ngandu et al, 2015) involving 1260 people aged 60-77 years old, that looked at treatments involving changes in life-styles to prevent dementia. It showed that puzzles and a healthy diet benefitted people, but dancing was particularly beneficial because it had a physical component and was social and fun. Frequent ballroom dancing brought about a 76% reduction in the chances of developing dementia. It was the most beneficial of all the hobbies and leisure activities examined. Similar findings from Kattenstroth's (2010) research found that older people took part in dancing over a long period (16.5 years on average) with a matching control group who had no history of dancing or sports activity. It concluded there were far-reaching beneficial effects in amateur dance groups; dance is a prime activity for preserving everyday life competences for elderly individuals

Public Health is moving from the NHS to Local Authorities; "Dance Active" (Burkhardt & Rhodes 2012), written for local public health commissioners gives guidance about commissioning dance. They identified opportunities for joint delivery between health, culture, and leisure. Dance programmes with regular sessions provide ways to be active, have fun and engage socially. This contributes to maintaining mental wellbeing.

### **2.8.2 Dance Introduction**

*"Dance is an elusive art. It slips through your fingers and toes. But a formidable one, as evidenced by its influence on twentieth-century arts ..."*

(Robinson and Hutera 1988: P5):

This theme includes

- The elusiveness of dance
- Dance types, and genres
- Community Dance
- Literature reviews and reports
- Dance Manifesto

These topics underpin my research and further literature and evidence are included in Chapter 5. Appendix 2 gives a more detailed account of the development of dance in the US and UK from the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century until present time to supplement what is included in this context section

This section briefly summarises issues illuminating how wide-ranging different dance manifestations are and how different parts impact on one another and co-exist at the same time. This is important underpinning for my research and provides ways to understand “active older people’s creative dance” and why it is emerging at this time in history within social/political contexts at this stage of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and why older people’s dance is now being perceived differently and gaining more support and interest.

### **The elusiveness of dance**

Copeland and Cohen (1983) produced the first US wide-ranging anthology on theory and criticism about dance. It included sixty essays by leading dance writers from different academic disciplines and practitioners in America and Europe from the sixteenth century to postmodern 1980s. It identified issues concerning dance aesthetics, dance as art, its underlying nature, ways in which movement conveys meaning and the relationship between dance and other arts. Questions asked were similar to those traditionally asked about other arts. The editors were aware there was resistance from some dancers, choreographers, dance critics and historians because they dismissed theory as irrelevant preferring descriptive writing only concerned with the immediacy of dance and keeping it grounded rather than becoming purely thought and theoretical. This book was written when dance was transforming from being within physical education and entering academic programmes in university art faculties. Bresnahan (2015) has scoped dance performance and its aesthetic and pragmatic aspects from a philosophical academic perspective and includes similar topics and demonstrates the complexity of dance as a topic and ways it differs from other art forms. Lihs (2009) argues dance is an activity too hard to define and there is much debate and disagreement about what should be included. Not all bodily movements count as dance and not all dance is rhythmical, symbolic, meaningful or expressive. Giurchescu (1994) argued dance is complex and involves more than how it is performed because it exists in a community that is a living phenomenon in the here and now and is a

form of social interaction. It has philosophical/ideological, sociological-political and cultural as well as anthropological functions within a given community. The role and significance of dance includes dance as an integral part of social events and dance as a system of knowledge and belief, social behaviour with aesthetic norms and values and can include choreography and relationships with other art forms.

Adshead-Lansdale and Layson (2006) cautioned against categorising different dance types historically because it gives false impressions of a linear developing hierarchy. Layson suggests the terminology and thesauri for dance are not sufficiently developed because of the ephemerality of dance and its relatively recent establishment as an academic discipline. It is often marginalised within other disciplines such as history and arts. She suggests a linear historical approach only partially reveals different dance styles because many thrive and co-exist at the same time. Dance should be considered in relation to prevailing attitudes and context so is understood on its own terms. Dance is both “part of” and “derived from” its context. If dance is considered three dimensionally the vastness and complexity become apparent. There are contradictions, failures and achievements and when these are understood there is more coherence. For example, performance dance theatre has importance in western dance history, but world-wide, social or traditional dance have highest importance. She suggests we are in post-modern, (some say post post-modern) post-colonial era. It is increasingly possible for dance to be seen in coherent ways and this will enable it to have greater recognition in future. These ideas are complemented by Bannerman (2009) who states that dance established itself within higher education in the UK from 1970s alongside more established arts disciplines. It has created knowledge and new pedagogy; moving significantly in a short time and is now informed by an increasingly fluid globalised world with diverse cultural variations. Previous assumptions about what is universal have been destabilised. He agrees with Layson that Western cultural dominance is now encompassing world cultures giving new dance models that are conceptual, practical and relational. These are useful when interwoven together to inform the academic discipline. He proposes teachers, researchers and students work together with awareness, energy and commitment. He suggests dance centres on individuals and interactions working within current social values and trends so encourages sensitivity, responsiveness

and has agency for negotiating difference and these attributes are needed increasingly in the future.

### **Dance types and genres**

The following grid gives a list of dance types. This is a way to categorise dance as there are many different variations.

Communal	Educational	Leisure and Recreational
Religious and Ritual	Social	Therapeutic
Theatrical	Traditional	

(Based on dance facts [www.dancefacts.net/dance-types](http://www.dancefacts.net/dance-types) )

Within each of these dance types there are different genres. I scoped Sorrell (1967), Cheney (1975), Butterworth (2012), Bales and Netti-Foil (2008), Lihs (2009) and Burkhardt & Rhodes (2012). Different dance styles and genres have sub-sets, traditions, techniques, choreographic styles and histories. They influence one another and combine in different ways. The following groups gives broad coverage relevant to my research and more detail is found in Appendix 2.

### **Different dance genres**

- Professional performance dance:
- Ballroom Dances
- Worldwide Dances and Latin Dances
- African-American and Traditional Jazz dances
- Modern Dances in the post-modern era
- Hip-hop/Funk.

Many genres are popular and have relevance for different groups of older people. My research directly explored “active older people’s creative/contemporary dance” because it was directly relevant to my work activities. However, some active older



people have chosen other dance genres such as classical ballet<sup>14</sup>; folk dances, ballroom and dance therapy treatments and do these regularly.

However, all/any styles and genres may influence “active older people’s creative dance”, to a greater or lesser extent dependant on facilitators’ and dancers’ interests.

Lansley and Early (2011) considering older professional dancers’ careers emphasise that making and practising dance is relevant to its social context and needs to retain the adventure of art. They consider dance being a life-force that everyone has a right to participate in and watch.

“In future, there will need to be new dance languages, vocabularies and processes rather than slavish commitment to one technique or style”.

(P185)

Although, my research is not about older professional dancers this statement is important.

Sadler’s Wells Company of Elders has been the flagship older people’s dance performance company since 1989. As shown in the Preface, it was instrumental in promoting more interest in older people’s dance activities. Butterworth (2012) recognises the contributions the Company of Elders has made. In her book, she also includes a long-term research project “Movement as the Memory of the Body” 2003-2006, involving several older professional dancers and amateurs aged 59-88. They received accolades when performing internationally. However, the growing interest in creative/contemporary dance that is explored in this report is not included.

I knew nothing about the Community Dance sector<sup>15</sup>. Amans (2008) edited an introductory textbook and guide to community dance practice. It is a collection of

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<sup>14</sup> There are some older people’s sessions and dance companies offering ballet for example “Sage” in London and the RAD pilots see chapter 5. I attended Sadler’s Wells outreach ballet class at Claremont.

<sup>15</sup> This was because I returned to my fulltime career in 1987 when this sector was emerging.

writings by experienced dance artists, practitioners and academics and included issues relevant to community dance debates. There are case studies, including one project about older people's dance. The book is a helpful practical guide and includes resources for those wishing to be involved in community dance. A companion book "Age and Dancing – Older People and Community Dance Practice" (ed. Amans 2013) concentrates on older people's dance. Issues concerning ageing populations and active ageing are included. Amans states the book gives reassurance to anyone wanting to work with older people. She recognises her position as an older person at a later stage of her career and wants to share her learning with others. She suggests these are exciting times for participatory artists despite current financial uncertainties. This is because of the increasing numbers of older people and government-backed imperatives supporting healthy ageing. Community dance-artists will be able to take advantage of expanding ranges of programmes and develop their careers. Various artists, practitioners and academics provide chapters giving their own perspectives. Within the book, individuality and giving people opportunities are emphasised. There is recognition that older people can dance in various ways. Whilst the book has several chapters addressing issues about caring and specific medical conditions associated with older people including coping with memory and different medical conditions, there was not a designated chapter recognising active older people's dance as a normal, mainstream dance category for capable older adults who enjoy dancing together as a life-enhancing, dynamic activity. Amans book confirmed my research was timely and complements others' theories about older people's dance.

Nakajima (2011) critically contrasts US post-modern dance and UK Community Dance. He argues US post-modern dance although innovative failed to question "dance" outside 'normal', healthy, young, able-bodied dancers. Walking was 'ordinary' but only applied to walking 'properly'. Old people or disabled people were not performers. In contrast, he suggests UK Community Dance sought out people with disabilities and elderly as vulnerable, disadvantaged groups. The intention was to advocate dance opportunities for everyone. Nakijima proposes that in Japan these two forms of participation are synchronised and professional older dancers challenge the Euro-American structures of young professional dancers or amateur older dancers. He argues such demarcations do not have to

be rigid. Older people's dance does not have to be pigeonholed as recreational or therapeutic. This is similar to some other cultures where dance forms such as Tango and Southern Indian dance revere older dancers.

Different strands of older people's dance, professional and amateur dance are coming together. This has relevance to my report as "active older people participating in creative dance" is entering Western dance on its own terms. My research is not about older professional dancers or Community Dance as traditionally focussed. My research will suggest there are new developments and joined-up thinking happening.

### **Dance Literature reviews and reports**

Research concerning dance activities for older people is gradually increasing. "An evidence review of the impact of participatory arts on older people" McLean et al (2011) in their report for the Mental Health Foundation, included a small section specifically about dance and noted two previous reviews: Keogh et al (2009) and Connolly and Redding (2010). It recommended that although both reviews recognised the benefits for dance as a participatory arts activity, evidence was limited and recommended further research with larger samples comparing different styles was required. The Trinity Laban Conservatoire review (2010) considered previous research undertaken in the dance and health fields relating to the impact of dance on elderly populations. It highlighted areas for further research noting although aerobic and social dance were explored within the framework of physiological impact, research was lacking concerning creative/contemporary dance. Social dance was identified as a highly appropriate physical activity for older populations. It suggests impacts of social dance (i.e. ballroom) might be replicated within creative dance but there might be additional or different impacts by placing greater emphasis on expressive and creative exploration and encouraging adaptable, freer movement vocabulary. It suggested more investigations were necessary as increasingly dance projects seem to adopt a different approach favouring creative, rather than social styles of dance. Perhaps this was an inevitable recommendation from research produced by a Conservatoire that is a centre of excellence for creative/contemporary dance. It is now offering creative dance for older people but as stated in The Preface, it did not previously. Many "baby-boomers" are not interested in traditional ballroom and/or

circle/folk dancing. The review concludes that dance has positive physiological and psychological benefits for older people, but more research can explore further.

This is echoed in another review's findings "Hot Facts, Cool Feet" (Dance South West for D0H 2010) aimed to provide a sense of the breadth of dance and health research across population groups. Compendiums for children, adults and older people's dance activities are included with summarised evidence. It sought to inform policy makers, managers and public health practitioners about dance and health programmes, pointing out that dance involves the body, emotions and mind, is both a physical activity and a means of expression and communication. It notes public health professionals are interested in using dance to promote health and wellbeing, but the dance sector had found it hard to convince them that dance offers genuine health benefits because academic studies were not easy to interpret.

"Keep Dancing" (CPA/BUPA 2011) promotes the benefits of older people dancing as an enjoyable social activity providing increased levels of physical exercise. Co-ordination, cognition and general mental wellbeing can improve. It found there is emerging evidence that dance can be a beneficial exercise for older people. However, policy makers in Government and beyond were overlooking the contribution dance makes towards the welfare of older people, often concentrating on less inclusive exercise and sports. It calls on policy makers to pay more attention to dance's physical and mental health benefits when promoting active lifestyles and healthy living especially for activities in care homes, hospitals and in the community.

The "Wellness" report (2013) includes a separate section on dancing and mentions the earlier report above "Keep Dancing" (2011). It reports that the popularity of TV programmes like "Strictly Come Dancing" increases interest to offer participatory dance sessions for older people in many different UK settings. Dancing for all ages, including older people, provides not just exercise but social interaction. Importantly, it argues there are relatively low drop-out rates, so older people gain proportionately greater exercise and other benefits overall from dance programmes. It also suggests that it challenges many of the negative stereotypes of ageing.

## **Dance Manifesto**

Dance Manifesto (Dance UK 2015) was a promotional tool prior to the 2015 General Election. It highlighted the contribution dance makes in the UK. Its main thrust is that dance can be a force for change to benefit society and builds upon a previous Dance Manifesto (Dance UK/National Campaign for the Arts 2006). Themes cover dance as a developing artform, integrating dance into every young person's education, everyone watching and participating in dance and dance as a growing profession. It suggests Government champions and supports local dance initiatives as it makes cultural, social and economic contributions and financial support and investment for research is needed. Local communities require venues and spaces for different dance activities.

This section briefly summarised issues illuminating how wide-ranging and complex and different dance manifestations are and how different parts impact on one another and co-exist at the same time. This is important underpinning and gives understanding about "active older people's creative dance" emerging at this time within social/political contexts, and why older people's dance is being perceived differently and gaining support.

### **2.8.3 Participating at community and national levels**

#### **This theme includes**

- Community of Practice
- Boundary spanning, Boundary spanners, Community Participation
- Age Friendly Cities

## **Communities of Practice**

Wenger and Snyder (2000) advocate communities of practice within work organisations. Communities of Practice features include developing members' capabilities, creating and exchanging knowledge. Members select themselves, have passion, commitment and identify with the group's expertise that lasts whilst there is interest in the group. These features are useful for understanding and analysing what is happening as more active older people dance regularly and build friendly relationships.

Thomas & Cooper (2002) researched the concept of "communitas" and how a sense of community is constructed through dancing and examines the meaning of social dancing for older people. Their qualitative research project, sought to explore the experiences of social dance for people aged over 60 years who attend various dance events in Essex and south-east London. The findings suggest that social dance experience was not simply a beneficial physical experience but had other significant benefits. It provides continuity as they enter and adjust to a new phase of life, offering occasions to be sociable, have fun in ways that both reflect, and go beyond, the dancers' teenage years and promotes a welcomed sense of community spirit. It is a way of becoming visible and aesthetically pleasing, and gives a sense of worth and achievement. Dancers can experience the joy of a fit, able body. However, Paulson and Willig (2011) identified that if a person loses their partner they often no longer participate in ballroom activities. Their ethnographic research with people in their 60-70s participating in circle and Scottish dancing concluded that these dance forms were conducive to constructing a sense of community amongst older people and provided empowering activities. Participants could actively be in the "culture" of the dance as well as socialising in the dance group.

## **Boundary spanning, Boundary spanners, Community Participation**

Important aspects of my work activities were networking, advising and collaborating. These activities are often technically known as "boundary spanning". Williams (2002, 2010) suggests boundary spanning offers the potential to devise work interventions that are superior in quality and innovative because this approach combines expertise, resources and sharing knowledge so that

different agencies can work together. Boundary spanners develop partnerships and collaborate over time, building relationships through joint working and making interconnections and interdependencies. To solve complex problems, issues are explored together, and new solutions found. The competences needed include focusing on personal relationships, building trust, communication, negotiation, and managing without direct power. Boundary spanners have networking skills and understand others' roles, responsibilities and motives. The boundaries they span reach across different organisations and these can be from the public, private and voluntary sectors. They have varied expertise and knowledge, feel confident sharing expertise and contribute towards collaborative work. Boundary spanners are in potentially influential positions to help frame, interpret, make sense of reality and shape the course of strategic action.

Sander and Putnam (2010) suggest that since 9/11 there is a resurgence of civil and social engagement (in the US), mainly among more affluent younger white people. They suggest that if this is not addressed, the US could become two nations with widening gaps in social capital and life chances with limited social mobility and increasing inequalities and simmering resentments. They suggest it is premature to know whether social media will find the right mix of virtual and real, to replace traditional social ties and what benefits and impact these might bring to everyone and civic society. This paper revisited earlier influential writing where Putnam (1995, 2000) argued that American civil society was breaking down and becoming disconnected. People were withdrawing from their communities and not participating with others. There was less family and neighbourly interaction and less participation in local organisations. People remained passive group members having less face-to-face contact. He used "Bowling Alone" as a metaphor for what was happening warning that when social capital declines there was a threat to community, democracy and neighbourhoods. Safety, trust and personal relationships, health and happiness would suffer. By creating the local choir and Vivacity, I was directly counteracting this "Bowling Alone" trend. Although, in the UK, there is not such a sharp racial divide, there is increasing inequality since the financial crisis.

Earlier, influential theorists saw mobilisation of ordinary and less advantaged people directly related to power relationships. Freire (1970,1996) argued that the

stability of communities depends upon power relations. The oppressed/powerless were often frightened by freedom and so society remains stable. He saw freedom being achieved through social action and liberation which benefitted the oppressed but also the oppressor. Education enabled the less advantaged to free themselves by developing dialogue and communication skills to express themselves, so becoming self-aware and more fully human and liberated through co-operation, unity and organising themselves effectively.

At the same time, another approach for community action was introduced by theorist/practitioner Alinsky (1971) based in Chicago, USA. He argued radicals who know the difference between being realistic and being rhetorical will be successful. He saw political engagement was needed to effect change. This is achieved by influencing and getting people engaged and communicating directly to politicians and influential people. Less advantaged communities can organise themselves and act together to achieve political power. It involves coming together, sharing ideas, lobbying and engaging with political decision makers. Radicals can work with ordinary people purposefully so that communities take on issues important to them. Friere's is a radical educational approach whereas Alinsky's involves lobbying and influencing. Both approaches concern learning, listening, sharing ideas and social action to enable ordinary people to better their own and their communities' lives. Alinsky's theories and methods are influential in the UK Citizen's movement, with which I had some links during my research. Although those activities are beyond this report, the approach gave me a deeper understanding about community activism and being heard.

### **Age Friendly Cities**

"Age Friendly Cities Project Guide" (WHO 2007) reported on two global trends for the 21st century-population ageing and urbanisation, by using "the city" as a starting point in society. Manchester was the first city in UK to gain Age Friendly City status. I attended its launch conference in 2010 and gave a seminar presentation about Vivacity that was still in early stages of development. Tinker and Ginn (2015) reported on London's progress on becoming age friendly. Some issues still needed addressing, including neighbourhood accessibility, so everyone can interact and participate in cultural life where they live. Community centres,



libraries and other cultural facilities were important. Voluntary groups that engage and assist older people needed support. The report mentions dance because since 2013, Silver Sunday, an annual celebratory event has included dance; dance classes provide ways to push boundaries and intergenerational activities organised by schools and community groups. Such activities benefit older and younger people by counteracting ageist attitudes that they suggest may stem from a dread of old age and young people's denial of ageing. The report recommends public services continue publicising and celebrating older people's multiple contributions to society, abolish upper age limits and commit to anti-ageist policies. They suggest if this happens, the media will be encouraged to follow. Local policies and practices will increasingly normalise positive attitudes towards ageing and benefits everyone because we all age. This echoes Walker's ideas and is crucial to this report's later chapters.

#### **2.8.4 Challenging perceptions**

The Arts, including dance can contribute to challenging perceptions. Since 2010 The Baring Foundation has funded arts organisations and projects within the broad theme of Arts and Older People, supporting forums bringing representatives from sectors together, supporting conferences in Manchester and Dublin, the development of the Age of Creativity website network and the Capital Age Festival in London. All this work has raised the profile of arts and the benefits of older people participating in arts activities. They funded research to consider exemplary practice in participatory arts with older people. Organ (2013) concludes that art is a vital agent for public discourse. Older generations voices and imagination have vital roles to play in shaping understanding and decision making in the public realm. She cites The Declarations of Human Rights Article 27 which enshrines the

*“right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community and to enjoy the arts”.*

The report argues that public policies often concentrate on youth and separating generations. This can lead to discrimination and gerontophobia. Those who are the objects of discrimination internalise the hatred and apologise for themselves, so limiting their identities. This leads to denial and trying to stay young and prove one's worth. She suggests arts activities cannot be limited to any specific impact

or outcome measures. In our society, the final stage of life can become a ghetto of banishment and invisibility. She suggests that Declaration 27 should nudge and expose the humanity and realities of ageing and creative work that is gathering across the UK and elsewhere and shift society's thinking towards arts and vitality for all, whatever age and stage of life.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has identified some underpinning contexts and theoretical concepts relevant to this report. The way in which the reflexivity between, desk-top research and new work activities practice and ways they influenced each other is analysed, interpreted and discussed further in Chapter 5.

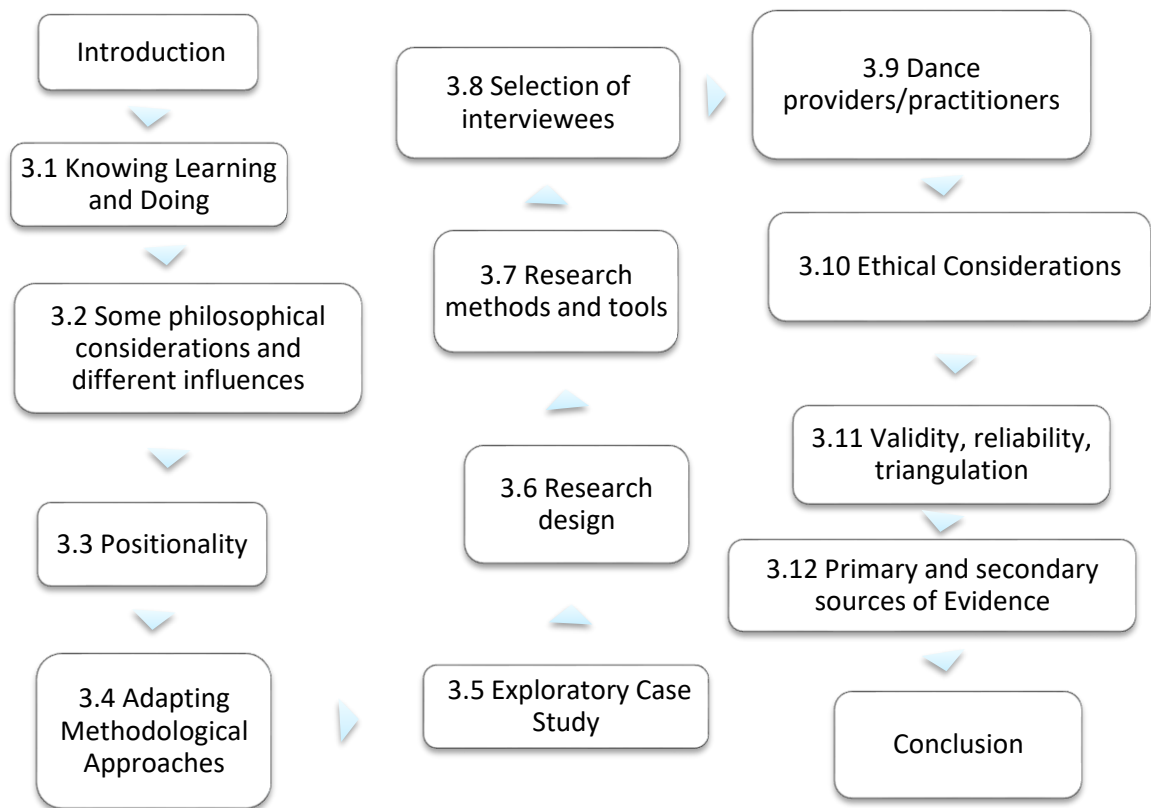
The next chapter details the methodological approaches, design, methods and tools that adapted over time to meet the challenges I faced in real time so that my research could coherently include interviews and work practice.

## **Chapter 3 Methodological approaches**

### **Introduction**

My methodological approaches adapted over time. This chapter shows my research was conducted with rigour and creativity (Costley et al 2010) involving competence from my past and new learning. I wanted my research to be work-based rather than just “work enhancing” especially once I knew I was getting involved in innovative activities where I was using my skills in new ways in different environments.

As outlined in chapter 1, initially, my research concerned older people who were dancing because I had access to them. I could capture their thoughts, feelings, reasons and meanings for dancing. My intention was that the research had an interpretative methodology drawn from phenomenology and hermeneutic inquiry using the voices of older people who were dancing. I had found a way to proceed with my research. Their interviews remained an important aspect of my research. I wanted to influence decision/policymakers. A survey using themes identified from interviewees’ data analysis involving more active older dancers would, I thought, add credibility to my research, initially being a mixed-methodology using qualitative and quantitative methods. (Cresswell 2012). Later my research adapted to incorporate my new work activities. My desktop research widened exploring more academic disciplines, work sectors and devising new boundaries. It had to remain manageable and fit-for-purpose. My methodological approach eventually became a multi-methodology using a variety of qualitative research methods (Cresswell 2013) multi-disciplinary complemented by transdisciplinarity. Eventually, it was pulled together using an exploratory case study approach (Yin 2014). The methods, tools, research questions and information about the qualitative interviews are also included. The dancing-journey concerning adapting the methodological approaches is outlined on the pathway below.



### 3.1 Knowing, Learning and Doing

My access to other active older people who were choosing to dance was worth researching. This topic encouraged me to return to phenomenology I studied over forty years ago,<sup>16</sup> and more recently when I became a coach-mentor. However, during the research process, my ideas and intentions outgrew my original research methodological design. I wanted to reflect critically on my emerging work practice and activities. My research needed to make sense of connectedness and relevance of emerging data and evidence (Morin 2008), influencing what I was learning and doing. This double-loop learning enabled me to critically reflect on my successes and set-backs, consider options then apply this learning to create further activities and opportunities (Argyris & Schön in Burnes, 2014). My relationships between work, learning and research activities influenced and informed each other.

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<sup>16</sup> I was a student at Goldsmiths University for Part 2 of my B.Ed.(Hons) in Sociology and Education and this university was a leading UK centre for Phenomenology in 1975

My personal vision included my set of values, concerns and aspirations (Senge 1990). I was seeking to find out “why?” and “how?” older people were dancing. Initially, I took Arbnor and Bjerke (2009) actor’s view; I was not seeking ways social relationships could change existing practices within organisations, so a macro-level systems view was inappropriate although I was aware that organisational change theory experience from my previous career underpinned my work practice. I was an active player, dancing with others so an actor’s view, based on social phenomenology and social constructivism oriented towards a philosophy of human life was appropriate. As a people-oriented person, I was interested in ways individuals make choices and construct individual meanings with others to make sense of their worlds.

The benefits and implications of active older people’s dance activities became more important during my project. More older people wanted to dance and more organisations and practitioners began providing sessions (see Chapter 4 and 5). My new work included being involved in boundary spanning activities, to create and promote dance and participatory arts.

It was important to include explanations of my reasoning and evolving methodological approaches because I want readers to know the reasons for the adaptations and this would enable them to see how evidence, findings and recommendations emerged. This chapter shows how my research data was gathered, the ways data and other evidence was analysed and synthesised and eventually written up. Schön (1987) emphasises that knowing and doing coexist in a spiral of activity where knowledge informs practice generating further knowledge leading to changes creating new knowledge through-and-in practice. I gathered evidence from new work that was incorporated into this report. Simultaneously, my own emerging ideas were aligning with activities happening in the external world. I was increasingly working with new colleagues and influencing them and they influenced me, which benefitted my research activities.

### 3.2 Some philosophical considerations and influences

A fundamental philosophical question concerns the nature of reality. This includes objective, socially constructed or individually constructed world views. (Fox 2007). Social constructivism and individual constructed worldviews underpin and complement my research. Social constructivism emphasises shared meanings about the world by groups of people because there is not one true reality in the social world but a shared reality affected by time and social perspectives. Each person has their own constructed world where they experience their own reality with a unique story and perspective of events. Rogers (1961) is critical of behavioural science that assumes human behaviour is based on similar laws and principles to natural science. He points out that no science is totally objective. My research was grounded in real world practice, informed by academic theories. I intended it would influence and contribute towards best practice.

*Whereas theory "thinks" the world, the phenomenology of practice "grasps" the world pathically i.e. opens up possibilities for creating formative relations between being and acting, between who we are and how we act, between thoughtfulness and tact. (van Manen, 2007:20)*

As shown in the previous chapter, ageing involves individual experiences, and political, social influences. Dance is a life-enhancing expressive activity as well as a physical activity. When researched quantitatively and objectively, individuals' life experiences are ignored or lost because measuring them is difficult. Quantitative research about older people's dance has concentrated on narrow topics using medical or health quantitative methods to research topics such as the effects of dance on dementia (Verghese 2003) and fall prevention (Hackney, Kantorovich and Earhart 2007). Although these topics are important and needed to be researched, they are different from my specific research topic finding out why active older people want to dance.

An important aspect of my research gives voice to active older people. Schutz (1970) considers the world of everyday life involving individuals' experiences circumscribed by objects, persons, and events when just living. People are "wide awake". They can make their own decisions about what is relevant and meaningful to them. This includes practical matters, different conduct, activity and knowledge from near-expert to vagueness. It can be incoherent, in-consistent but only

partially clear. I used my coaching skills to enable interviewees to express themselves in their own ways when considering why they were dancing and what meanings they gave their experiences. Rogers (1961) when arguing about the place of the individual in society describes

*“Man as a process of becoming...achieving worth and dignity through the development of his potentialities, who moves on to more challenging and enriching experiences in an ever new and changing world”. (P395)*

As a researcher, it was useful to find out about older people’s different responsibilities, uncertainties in their lives, aspirations and reasons for dancing. They have inner beings as well as functioning within an external shared world.

Participatory research brings theory and practice together. It’s starting premise is that knowledge of reality, and what is experienced as reality, are co-created from a mutual understanding arising from lived experience. It involves collaborative activity geared towards action (Costley et al 2010). This was exactly how I was collaborating and sharing experiences with others. However, I was not positioned to change or transform existing work practice with others. Vivacity only gained sufficient funding during the latter stages of the research. I had not founded it as a research experiment. My boundary-spanning experiences involved collaborating and sharing ideas but not to transform existing practice within an organisation.

Another influence was grounded theory. Charmaz (2008) suggests it encourages a systematic approach using general key questions that keeps research manageable, efficient and exciting. “What?” “How?” and “what does that mean?” followed by analysis using tight, specific coding. These questions were useful. However, I prefer knowing about context and creating structures to work within so that ideas and knowledge emerge and come together creatively. Grounded theory was too vague initially and exceedingly restrictive when coding analysis and writing up. I wanted to learn about the topic’s context from the outset. However, the similarities my research with grounded theory included being inductive, gathering raw data from grassroots level and then forming ideas and recommendations.

### 3.3 Positionality

Readers are aware of my culturegram and primary social identities. Here my positionality is considered in relation to my research activities. My research involved intertwining my “self” and my subject and making explicit my varied perspectives (Peshkin 1998) I identified my own subjective “I”s included seeking social justice, dancing, being compassionate, a realist, inquisitive and an active older person. These amplified and empowered my primary identities. Being self-aware of them enabled me to challenge my biases and assumptions.

Over time, I recognised I was becoming an “older dancer” rather than being an older person who wanted to dance again; performing, founding and managing Vivacity as well as acknowledging the relevance of previous dance experience. Dance providers/practitioners with whom I had conversations confirmed this. They accepted me as a credible researcher and dance practitioner because of my positionality.

During my research, I began as an outsider but increasingly became an insider. I chose to attend an Age Action Alliance (AAA) creative arts working group as an individual not knowing anyone, but was then invited to become co-chair and subsequently led the group. I learned through-and-on-practice (Schon1987).

I worked and researched with reflexivity using my professional skills. I developed my dancing capabilities. I had no idea that my personal interests would become increasingly socially and politically significant. I became positioned within the crest of a wave developing a social phenomenon that continues to gain momentum.

Gradually, being an IWBL researcher became internalised and one of my primary identities as I adapted my research, interpreted, critically reflected, analysed, interpreted and synthesised my data and evidence and decided what should be included in this report.



### **3.4 Adapting methodological approaches.**

In October 2012, Professor Silverman presented a provocative lecture at the university on 'Analysing Interview Data' criticising researchers for concentrating predominately on interviews rather than understanding everyday life and seeing remarkable things in mundane settings. He argued good research, like good art, needed to stand outside the taken for granted assumptions that inform everyday life.

Following the lecture, I researched further. Silverman (2007) suggests there are many ways to collect evidence especially as people's experiences and reports are not necessarily the most reliable sources of data. Obvious actions, settings, and events could be treated as potentially remarkable. Talks, documents and other artefacts as well as interaction can offer revealing data and arguments can be made by critically sifting through data collected. I understood exactly what he was advocating. I could include my different positionalities, effectively gathering research data, using ethnographic methods including participant observations, autoethnography, narrative and live evidence with findings from qualitative interviews.

Over time I recognised relationships between different contexts, theories and work practice were adapting. Topics not about my specific topics but related to them, such as health and wellbeing, keeping people active in their communities, arts and health, different aspects of dance, exercise loneliness and dementia were rising up social/political agendas.

By July 2014 I critically reconsidered my data, ideas, drafts, documents and notes and discarded some previous research ideas (See Table 2, 3.9). I redesigned my research methods making the research process manageable and focussed. My research was inductive i.e. research based on grassroots activities but also deductive i.e. I was strongly influenced by national reports, collaborative activities and academic literature and I compiled lists of potential findings and recommendations, as I was analysing interviewees' data and being influenced by increasing ad-hoc work activities. I had concept threshold blocks (Mewburn 2012) which were preventing me writing, especially because my original mixed-methodology using qualitative interviews and creating a quantitative survey was no

longer fit-for-purpose. It became increasingly difficult to critically engage and incorporate evidence from my work activities. I did not think the kind of quantitative survey I could research and write on my own would be influential or make a strong contribution to policy/decision-makers.

Over time, my research topics became increasingly timely because “active older people” and “older people dancing” gained more relevance in the external world. More reports became available and topics clustered together in different ways. Eventually my research project became transdisciplinary. (Boud and Tennant 2006). Transdisciplinarity recognises that different disciplines intertwine, including spirituality, giving opportunities for making new coherent knowledge. (Nicolescu 2008). Transdisciplinarity transcends across discipline and practice borders so that synthesis and new knowledge can be created. This approach encapsulated what I was experiencing whilst I was scoping and reading literature from different sources and networking with colleagues from different disciplines and sectors.

Learning about Transdisciplinarity was a much-needed breakthrough and enabled me to proceed. It liberated my research because I was already experiencing it in practice and found ways to use theories about it to gather evidence and synthesise it to create new knowledge. As an insider, reflective practitioner-researcher using transdisciplinarity, I was encouraged to be exploratory, question and become an active, ethical participant and relate with world affairs (Mourini 2008). Ageing populations and keeping older people active were becoming increasingly important topics.

Gibbs (2015) defines transdisciplinarity as going across, through and beyond disciplinary boundaries. Transdisciplinarity encourages creative ways of working, allowing for innovative ways of thinking. Maguire (2015) argues it gives research a conceptual framework within an increasingly complex, social, political and economic world where disciplines and sector islands are more connected.

Nicolescu's (2008) theories were an important influence enabling my research to be more dynamic and multi-dimensional. It fitted well with my understanding concerning the nature of knowledge, what is happening in the world and ways I was experiencing reality. Transdisciplinarity complemented the multi-disciplinary

approach for disciplines such as social gerontology and dance that I had been researching, it permitted me to explore, take risks and think about topics in different combinations and relationships. Transdisciplinarity uses three dimensional theoretical, phenomenological and problem-solving approaches which encompasses different levels of realities and a broad sense of spirituality. It acknowledges we are living in a complex, uncertain, pluralistic world. This way of inquiring and theorising increased my ability to gather various data, analyse and synthesise knowledge and gradually bring it together.

My research evidence clustered together in innovative combinations beyond single or multi-disciplines. My methodological approaches and design, informed my learning and work practice and the connectedness between them. Methods and tools were selected that took advantage of my access to older dancers and my varied work activities. Transdisciplinarity helped me understand the messiness of my work and ways different topics interwove within a fast-changing external environment

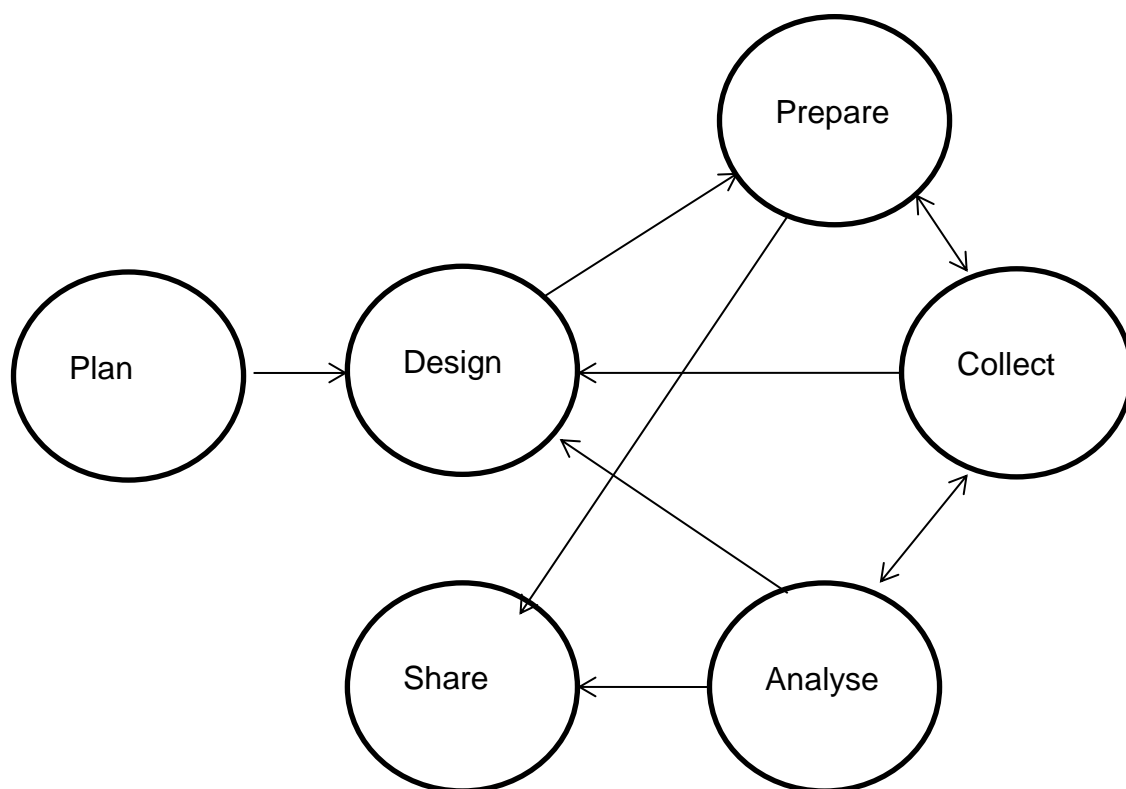
As can be seen, my methodological approaches and design adapted over time, informed my learning and work practice and the connectedness between them. Methods and tools were selected that took advantage of my access to older dancers and my varied work activities.

Eventually, I decided that Yin's (2014) flexible, pragmatic case study model would enable my research to progress.

### **3.5 Exploratory Case Study**

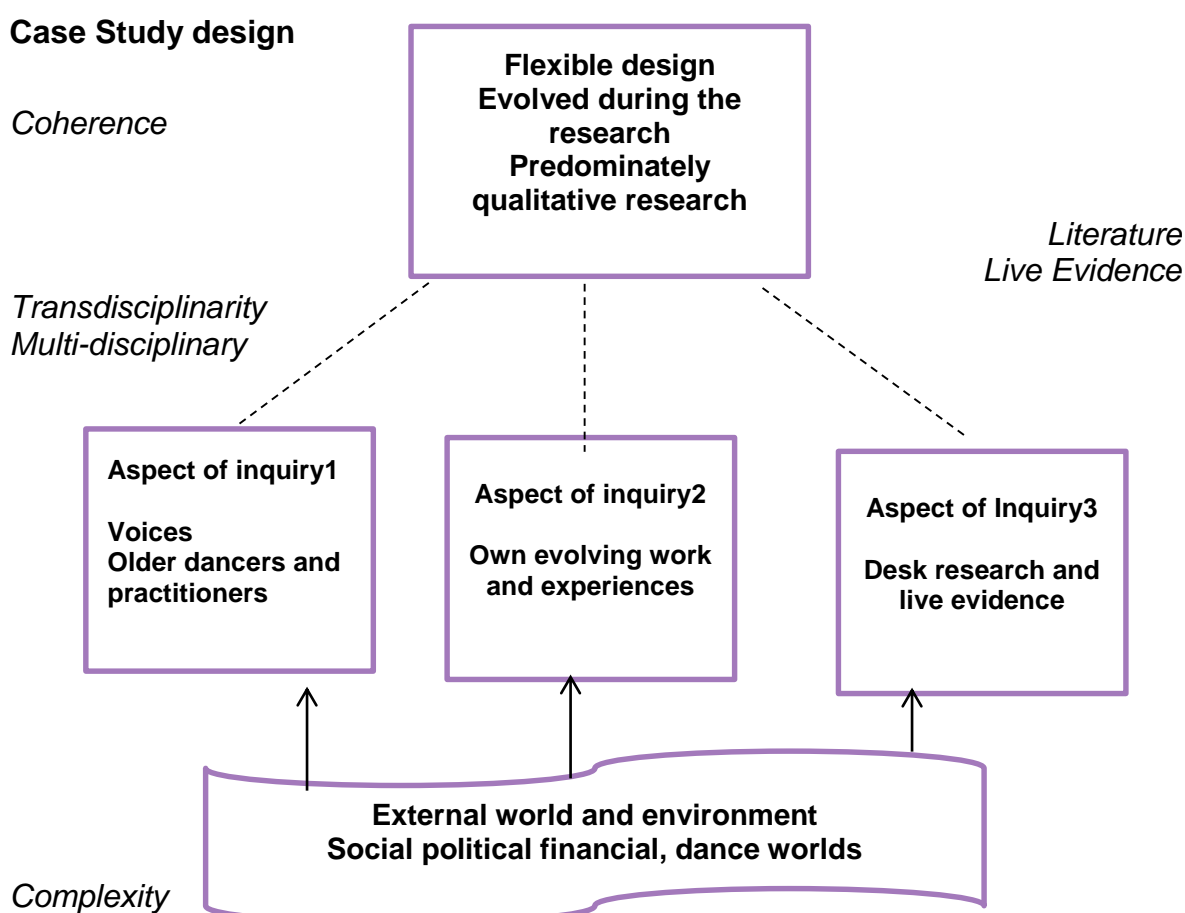
Yin (2014) suggests existing knowledge is not always sufficient and does not necessarily provide the conceptual framework needed. In such cases, an exploratory case study is applicable. Costley et al (2010) suggests practitioner/researchers can decide for themselves what needs reviewing and ways to incorporate literature into their research. Although there was little relevant literature specifically about "active older people's creative dance" or "active older people" there were many topics emerging that bounded it and had relevance. Over time, my research topics became increasingly timely because "active older

people” and “older people dancing” gained more relevance in the external world. Some reports became available and topics clustered in different ways. Yin’s (2014) case study model gave clarity and increased my understanding about linear and iterative ways of carrying out research. I wrote a protocol to bring my research up to date and potential new approach into a coherent plan. (See Appendix 9)



**Figure 4** Using Case Study Research: A linear but iterative process.

The linear route involved planning, designing, preparing, collecting, analysing and sharing. This model explicitly shows opportunities for iterative pathways where stages are revisited allowing for complexity and development of new ideas and data. It confirmed ways my research could progress. I made my case study design explicit, giving underpinning structures for my evolving research. (See Figure 5) It had clarity, flexibility and coherence.



**Figure 5** Case study showing three aspects of my inquiry and external influences.

### 3.6 Research design

My research adapted, some methodological methods were discarded and others introduced. My in-depth semi-structured interviews with older people, informal conversations with leading practitioner/providers, work activities, desktop research and live evidence became the three aspects of inquiry for my exploratory case study. See Figure 5 above.

I used phenomenological methods for the semi-structured conversational interviews with older people who were dancing. I had conversations with dance provider/practitioners. I was observing and reflecting, learning through conversations and listening and putting ideas into action. My research widened to include stories, experiences, narrative and autoethnography.

Delamont (2007) criticises the use of autoethnography. In her opinion autoethnography is an abuse of privilege and researchers are uninteresting. I realised the importance of positionality within work-based research and ways it influenced research processes. It became obvious that explicit, critical analysis and reflexivity on my “self” and interactions with others through my work practice was required for my work-based doctorate. Narrative, autoethnography and reflective thinking were important. Autoethnography enabled me to analyse my personal experience to understand cultural experience as an older person, older dancer and boundary spanner. I used autobiography and ethnography so my autoethnographic research was both a process and product (Ellis, Adams and Bochner 2010).

I wanted to influence policy/decision makers and dance provider/practitioners. My research complemented others’ emerging research and activities especially from late 2014 onwards.

### **3.7 Research methods and tools**

The project case study design was shown in Figure 5 above.

Table 2 outlines the methods and tools used during my research, whether they were included, discarded or influenced my research. Further details about some methods used are included within the project phases in Chapter 4. I kept a reflective journal throughout the DProf process. These were references when report writing and a learning tool for my own development.

<b>Methodological approaches</b>	<b>Methods and Tools</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Include/ Discard</b>
Phenomenological	In-depth conversational interviews	Voices of older people – meaning and purpose of participating in creative dance Informal interviews with provider/practitioners	Included
	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis(IPA)	Using several levels of analysis and coding processes for each transcription then further coding for themes to develop. Too detailed, not practical, unnecessary.	Discarded
	NVivo 10 - qualitative in-depth on-line analysis	Interpretation of in-depth interviews Emerging themes develop and nodes and themes developed	Included
	Reflective journal Reflective notes	Data and evidence for research content. Critical reflection and learning from activities	Underpinned research.
Hermeneutics	Hermeneutic analysis	Deep transcription insights Influenced research	Not selected
Mixed-methods	Qualitative interviews, Create a quantitative survey built on identified themes. Involve larger number of older dancers	Qualitative interview data	Retained
		Survey to give statistical data. Would be too small-scale so not fit for purpose	Discarded

<b>Methodological approaches</b>	<b>Methods and Tools</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Include/ Discard</b>
Multi-methods	A range of qualitative methods and tools (see other entries in this table)	Relevant for my work-based research using qualitative methods and tools to create influential and relevant research	Selected
Ethnography Autoethnography	Live evidence and documentation, programmes, pictures, magazine articles, work documents. Observations Narrative Auto-ethnography	Use and analyse real work activities and everyday life including others and own experiences and insights. Gives access to behaviour, thoughts, feelings and creativity. Makes use of being part of a culture and having cultural identity. Use personal illustrations. Characteristics of culture can become familiar for insiders and outsiders.	Included
Grounded theory	Inductive content based on evolving work that informed the research. However, the research was informed from the start by theory from literature giving context.	Influenced research	Not selected
Action research	Make changes or improvements through a cycle of investigation, action and reflection that is useful to the project at hand and others. (Costley et al 2010)	Influenced research but I was not in control of a suitable work activity.	Not selected.

**Table 2** Methodologies, tools, purposes and whether retained or discarded



### 3.8 Research questions

From the start of the DProf programme I made lists of possible questions. I knew questions would influence my research outcomes. My awareness concerning the importance of questioning came from my experience working for an awarding body and being an experienced executive coach. I could converse with people and listen to them with self-awareness, get them to think deeply for themselves and articulate their thoughts without me imposing my ideas on them. My questions had to be answerable (Fox 2007) and were a prerequisite for case study research (Yin 2014). Questions needed to be broad enough to enable evidence and data to be gathered and analysed.

I devised a cluster of overall questions that underpinned my research and could be used for devising questions for interviews and reflecting on the dance activities I was managing or getting involved in. These were derived from Stinson et al (1990).

- 1. What experiences do active older people gain from becoming involved in creative dance?*
- 2. What meaning do they give to their dancing?*
- 3. How can sharing interests in similar phases of life enhance wellbeing, practice and image?*
- 4. How can sessions be structured to create the best environment for encouraging inclusion?*
- 5. Will widening opportunities for creative dance performance positively promote active older people's images and capabilities, changing attitudes at local, national, social, political levels and within performing arts?*

These questions were included in my research proposal and informed the question aid-memoire grid I created for conversational semi-structured interviews with selected older people who were dancing. (See Appendix 3).

This phenomenological interviewing became my case study's first aspect of inquiry. I also had conversations with some dance providers/practitioners. From January 2013, my research incorporated work activities. I created a question matrix with a main question with sub-questions that remained robust and relevant during my research activities. The matrix was an underpinning structure. It was broad enough to incorporate new work activities. The matrix headings were

Individual	community/ national level,
Dance	change and images

Some questions related to more than one heading and so have different colour outlines.

**Figure 6,** Main question and sub-questions matrix, is shown below

## Individual

What are active older people's lives like at this phase of life and what is important to them?

What are the benefits and concerns at this stage of life?

What are the benefits of participating in creative dance?

How can participating in creative dance influence other aspects of life?

How do active older people feel when dancing? What does it mean to them?

What other dance activities are people involved in now and previously (if at all)?

What is the recent history of dance?  
What is the influence of modernism and post-modernism? What is the future and is there a place for older dancers?

## Dance

What is Community Dance, and its relationship, similarities and differences to & from other dance activities?

**Bridges**  
**Wellbeing, Health**  
**Responsibilities and needs**  
**Spirituality**  
**Connectedness**  
**Isolation – social cohesion**  
**Dance forms**

**MAIN QUESTION:**  
**Why do active older people choose to participate in creative dance and are there implications and benefits?**

What is dance? What are the implications as it bridges health, sports, leisure and arts?

Is there a need for an aesthetic for a new older people dance?

Do older people want to watch dance? Do older people want to perform? Do dance events need audiences i.e. professional and amateur? What are ways to encourage audiences?

## Community/National

What are the political and contextual issues? Demography; modernism/post-modernism; diversity, financial austerity etc? Secularism; citizenship; riots etc

What are the relationships and connectivity issues?  
Inter-generational; breaking down silos and barriers etc.

What are the community benefits if more dance & participatory arts provision is available?

How can a local "community of interest" in dance improve relationships and help to prevent isolation.

What are the outcomes and implications if a new dance form for active older people's creative dance is developed and flourishes? How will it be accepted in the "dance world"?

How can positive images of active older people help to increase participation in local activities and citizenship?

Will increased older people's dance activities enable and improve the image of this age group? How can this be created and promoted?

## Images and change

## **Creating an “aide-memoire” question grid**

I had access to older people from different backgrounds (see 3.10). I compiled a flexible “aide-memoire” grid (See Appendix 3) based upon my initial research questions. I used it to guide the conversational interviews, but it did not control them and each interviewee covered topics in their own ways and order. As researcher, it gave me boundaries and was a “memory-prompt” giving me confidence so I could relax during conversations. The second column was a reminder to assist me formulating questions but interviewees did not have to cover the topics listed.

The Five Ways to Wellbeing (NEF 2008) also informed development of the grid:

- Connect
- Be active
- Take notice
- Keep learning
- Give

National Economics Foundation (NEF) developed these “ways” from evidence gathered in the UK government’s Foresight Project on Mental Capacity and Wellbeing (2008) to ensure wellbeing-promoting strategies and activities were included and prioritised. (<http://www.fivewaystowellbeing.org/>). I considered them because I wanted the conversations to cover issues that were relevant to policy/decision makers and audiences.

### **3.9 Selection of interviewees**

The interviewees were not a representative sample or random. I was not comparing and contrasting responses to prove hypotheses, so they did not have to be similar. Each had their own voice. I chose the eleven interviewees purposively (Smith, Flowers, Larkin 2009) so that their individual narratives and interpretations gave insights. (see below) They came from different social and economic backgrounds and ages from 58 – 82. I did not want my research only to be London-centric. Through the internet, I found dance sessions based in a SW city arts centre that was set up following the BBC “Imagine” television programme. I contacted Hazel, (a pseudonym), a professional dance therapist who facilitated the

older people's dance sessions. I interviewed her and three dancers (see below). Hazel was one of the dance provider/practitioners in my research. We met, and she agreed to participate in my research. She selected three participants who regularly attended her sessions.

I considered conducting focus groups but decided face-to-face conversational interviews, where individuals expressed their detailed ideas, were preferable. This method used my coaching skills to best advantage.

My relationships with interviewees varied:

- **Interviewees 1,8,9,11** attended Vivacity sessions. We had friendly relationships and danced together but I did not know them outside sessions.
- **Interviewee 6** attended a local dance class I led 30 years ago, and attended Vivacity sessions. We had a friendly relationship, but I did not know her outside dance sessions.
- **Interviewee 2** was a friend. She had not discussed her new dancing activity with me prior to her interview. She had recently joined Company A.
- **Interviewee 3** was a new friend I met through dancing sessions
- **Interviewee 5** was dancing in Company A, but I did not know him.
- **Interviewees 4,7,10** were unknown before I visited the SW arts centre to interview them. I observed the dance session Hazel facilitated and interviewed them on 30/4/2013

I included two men who were dancing as it was important to research their ideas as well as those of women dancers. Table 3 (below) gives interviewees' details with snapshots based upon interviewees' data. Further detailed snapshots (See Appendix 6).

Name	G	Age	Ethnicity/ Background (self-identified)	Present Location	Work Present/past	Status	Education qualifications	Interview date
Belle	F	72	White Anglo-Saxon Protestant From USA	North London (urban)	Part-time psychotherapist. Previously psychotherapist and family psychologist.	Married Mother Grand-mother	HE and Professional qualifications	15/3/2013
Bryony	F	65	White Caucasian Ukrainian extraction, Jewish	Home Counties (Town)	Retired Developing new art business. Previously property solicitor, secretary in law firms	Single following divorce  Mother grandparent	O levels Left school at 16, later HE and professional qualification	12/11/2012
Eliza	F	65	British English with mixed background	East London (suburban)	Retired Previously: Civil servant Nurse	Married Mother  Cared for several older relatives	College Professional qualifications	24/7/2012
J1	F	79	White Caucasian, English	Outskirts SW city (rural)	Early career "Librarian" and sales in a retail chain. Left paid work on marriage	Married	Left grammar school at 16	30/4/2013
Ken	M	67	White Anglo-Saxon	South London (urban)	Retired but occasionally doing IT and website work. Previously: telecoms, mime artist, kitchen fitter	Married  Father Grandparent	GCE standard Vocational qualification and OU courses.	14/8/2013
Maria	F	82	White Roman Catholic, British Italian Born in London	North London (urban)	Retired Before marriage: waitress in family business. No paid work after marriage	Widow  Mother Grandparent	Basic education evacuee during WW2.	16/5/2013

Name	G	Age	Ethnicity/ Background (self-identified)	Present Location	Work Present/past	Status	Education qualifications	Interview date
Penny	F	66	British White, middle class Anglo-Saxon	Recently moved from SW small town to SW city centre	Having gap year Previously nurse, university lecturer Became therapist a few years ago	Widow  Mother Grandparent	HE and professional qualifications	30/4/2013
P1	M	75	Chinese originating from Singapore, Londoner	North London (urban)	Owns and heads after-school education franchise Previously: civic and structural engineer	Father  Married	Polytechnic engineering, maths	13/6/2013
Toni	F	63	Black Jamaican British	North London (Suburban)	Retired from prison service - health care assistant/phlebotomist. Now, occasional ad-hoc sessions. Previously: several part-time jobs including care assistant, school cleaner, playgroup worker, factory work assistant, sewing machinist	Married  Mother Grandparent Foster carer	Basic education and vocational training	9/8/2012
V1	F	64	White European	SW city within city walls and edge of countryside	Retired Previously NHS civil servant, front desk work, working part- time from 60 years before that fulltime	Single	Secondary education	30/4/2013
Yildas	F	58	Turkish Cypriot	North London Borough (urban)	Part-time school breakfast club organiser, dinner/special needs assistant. Previously: child-minder, sewing machine assistant. Worked on family farm prior to marriage.	Married  Mother Grand-mother	Basic education Left school at twelve	14/11/2012

**Table 3** Interviewees

### **3.10 Leading dance provider/practitioners**

I had conversations with the following leading dance provider/practitioners who were interested in older people's dance. I selected them because I wanted to know about their organisations, find out their thoughts about my research and have conversations with them to gather evidence and share ideas.

I had conversations with

**1. Fergus Early** an expert on community dance, older people's dance, founder of Green Candle.

**2. Ken Bartlett**, Chief Executive of the Foundation for Community Dance (FCD). I had two conversations with him before he retired in 2013.

**3. Hazel** (see 3.10) In 2011, I sought her advice and shared ideas. We built a friendly, professional relationship and met again in 2013 when I observed her facilitating a session. In 2014, we had a far-ranging conversation. Her dance sessions began in 2009.

**4. Maggie Killingbeck** Chair of a national Movement and Dance organisation. She led a PGCE Dance course and was Head of Dance on the Physical Education dance programme at a university outside London. She has extensive dance teaching experience for all age groups, as well as teaching dance inset courses, external examining and dance moderating. She is a long-term member of a contemporary dance class. She set up a dance class through University of the Third Age (U3A) where she encourages creative dance.

**5-7** Three experienced trainers from an established exercise and movement organisation who asked to meet in January 2014 because they were interested in an article I had written about my research (See Appendix 5).

**8. Joce Giles** Director of Creative Projects, Rambert UK. We had a conversation in April 2015. I attend Rambert Mercury Movers sessions.



### **3.11 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations were important during all phases of my research, directly impacting on its design and implementation. I critically reflected on my actions and the effects I had on others (Costley et al 2010). I founded Vivacity before my DProf programme began. My role was founder/manager, dancer and neighbour, not a researcher using it as a “case” or “experiment”. Some insights informed my research, but I decided not to focus on the content and relationships happening in sessions.

When applying for grants or writing evaluations, it was important that local people gave their opinions, so funders could understand the importance of supporting dance activities locally. My ideas based on experience and my new work activities were well received at regeneration meetings.

During my other dance activities, I built friendly relationships with dancers who became, acquaintances and friends. I wanted to be an ordinary participant, not an objective researcher-practitioner. I did not want to compromise newly-formed friendships especially as I wished these relationships to continue after my research ended. I would have felt uncomfortable interpreting and making judgements about behaviour, relationships and everyday occurrences within dance sessions in which I was participating. It was too personal. I was not a research field-worker observing objectively, making judgements on facilitators’ choreography or ways they related to us as older dance participants. I made no secret about my work-based doctorate, answering questions whenever anybody showed interest and appreciated their support and kindness. I made similar decisions when collaborating with others whilst networking. I was building trusting relationships. I was not researching individuals’ social interactions and behaviour. However, I considered it ethically acceptable to use experiences to generally inform my research. I remained true to my values and no conflicts or ill feelings emerged with peers or colleagues during the research process.

My programme and research proposal were approved and project ethical approval given by the University in February 2012.

My report needed to be believable to my audiences and bring new insights into unfamiliar social experiences. (Ellis 2011). Within this report, I have been explicit, making transparent my biases as a reflective work-based practitioner. Chapter 5 includes interviewees' data. I did not want to create soundbite quotes. Each interviewee agreed to be interviewed, was treated with respect and had space and time to communicate in their own ways. I made every effort not to influence their answers. Interviewees were informed about the research, how conversations would be conducted and the importance of confidentiality and anonymity and signed consent forms. (Appendix 4) I used my professional coaching skills to put interviewees at ease. Our conversations flowed easily. I was mindful my research might affect interviewees because they were recalling and reflecting upon previous experiences and present and future aspirations. Their honesty and openness were gratifying and appreciated. Interviewees could ask questions and comment.

I interpreted interviewees' transcripts with care, respect and accuracy. (See 4.3) and transcripts were stored securely. I used NVivo 10 software to analyse the data and interpret it. This enabled all the raw data to be analysed and themes emerged. All nodes and themes were trackable back to transcripts that were stored securely.

I appreciated the time dance provider/practitioners spent having conversations with me. I informed them about my research and they gave me ideas and guidance. I prepared potential topics and/or questions I wished to cover. They commented and confirm notes following our conversations.

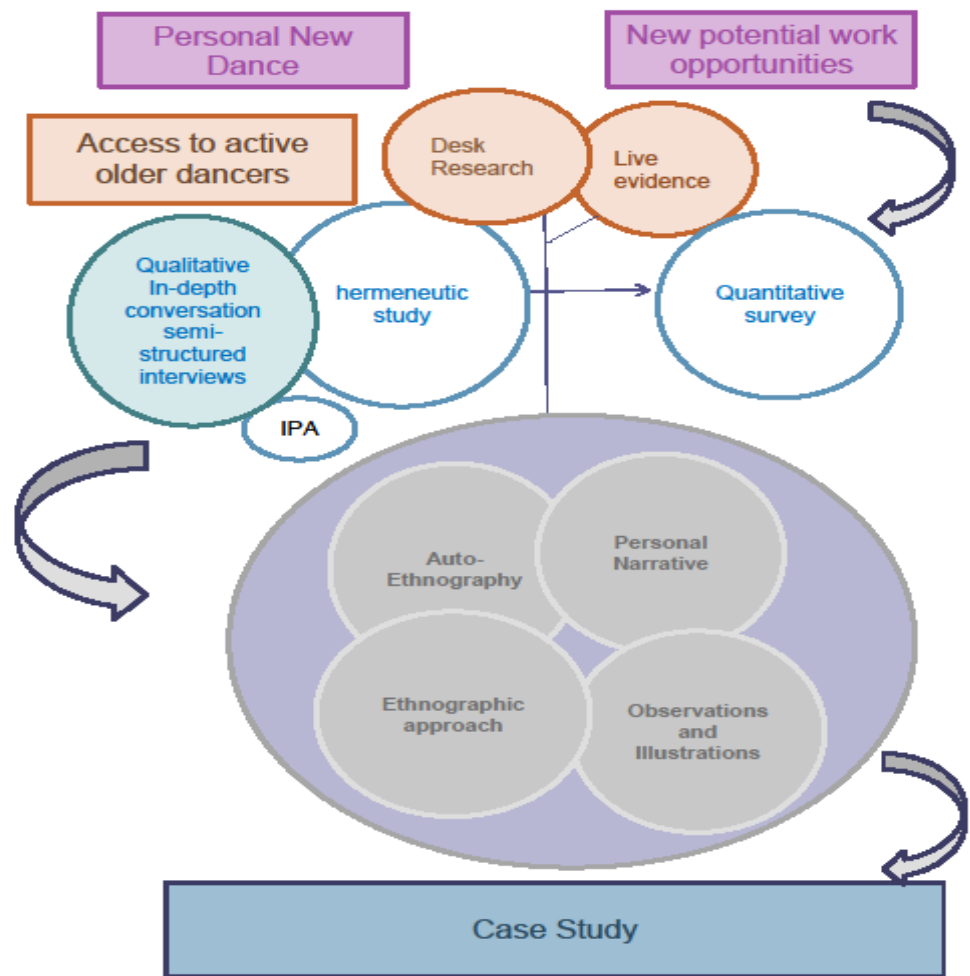
### **3.12 Validity, reliability, triangulation.**

My research was based on empirically generated data, live evidence and academic literature. New theories and research, networks and organisations emerged during the research process. There were conferences and seminars and more media coverage about relevant topics. (See chapter 4 and 5). This was useful when confirming my research was purposeful and complemented others' research. Ideas from my research were becoming realities so confirming their relevance. I shared ideas with some leading practitioner/providers, learning and influencing each other and this double-loop learning enabled me to adapt and

develop, informing and influencing my research as it progressed. Although working alone, I checked and tested out ideas with critical friends and older people I knew through different dance sessions.

The reliability of my data analysis increased following my decision to use NVivo 10 software. (See 4.3) It enabled me to use phenomenological data analysis in a systematic way that was in-depth and focussed. Each interviewee's data remained coherent but small sections from each one could be clustered with others under nodes. The integrity of each was maintained, themes and sub-themes emerged.

Figure 7, below, illustrates the processes that I used, including, methods and tools.



**Figure 7** Research design plan and development as it emerged because of new work and my developing knowledge. Potential research methods research used or discarded

**Key:**

**Pink:** Start

**Orange:** Early work and preparing the research proposal

**Blue:** Research proposal accepted

**White:** methods critically considered and discarded

**Grey:** Broadening research methods to incorporate work activities

**Final = Case Study**

### **3.13 Primary and secondary sources of evidence.**

My research included a wide range of evidence at different stages of the dancing-journey which developed my learning, created new practices or solved problems (Costley et al 2010:8). This expertise was incorporated into my practice and research.

Research topic boundaries were important as my case study became transdisciplinary. I developed a better understanding about older people, their interests and ways they were perceived. Topics such as ageing, creative arts and older people, new government initiatives about health and wellbeing and changes in demography interwove and I had to navigate in and around them. Themes increasingly cut across academic and work disciplines. Gathering relevant evidence was important because related topics kept emerging. I was making contact with more people from different sectors.

The case study's third aspect of inquiry included "live evidence". Some research and/or lobbying organisations gave presentations at conferences and/or seminars where research evidence and reports were presented. For example, International Longevity Centre (ILC) and Age UK and these were "live literature". Such presentations are innovative and often cutting edge, but the content often has not been peer-reviewed or scrutinised by others and so needs careful consideration. (Maguire at university seminar 2013). Some live literature was included as evidence in my report.

My research also had data and evidence gathered from various work activities. I called this "live evidence" as it was not "live literature" or desktop research but evidence gathered from the workplace in real time. It included primary and secondary sources. I was influenced by my work concerning National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), where evidence is gathered to demonstrate competence. "Live evidence" was not literature but my own experiences incorporated into the research. Some were primary sources including evidence from dance performances, managing Vivacity, participating in seminars and conferences, my written business plans (Appendix 7), boundary spanning activities and articles I wrote (Appendix 5). I wrote narratives, reflection notes on my experiences and

used documents I produced and collected during the research process as data. Secondary sources of live evidence included dance performance programmes; videos of performances; newspaper and magazine cuttings.

Files for all data and evidence were stored in hard copy files, or systematically labelled and filed in my computer filing system or in Zotero filing software and analysis of interviews were stored in NVivo 10 software.

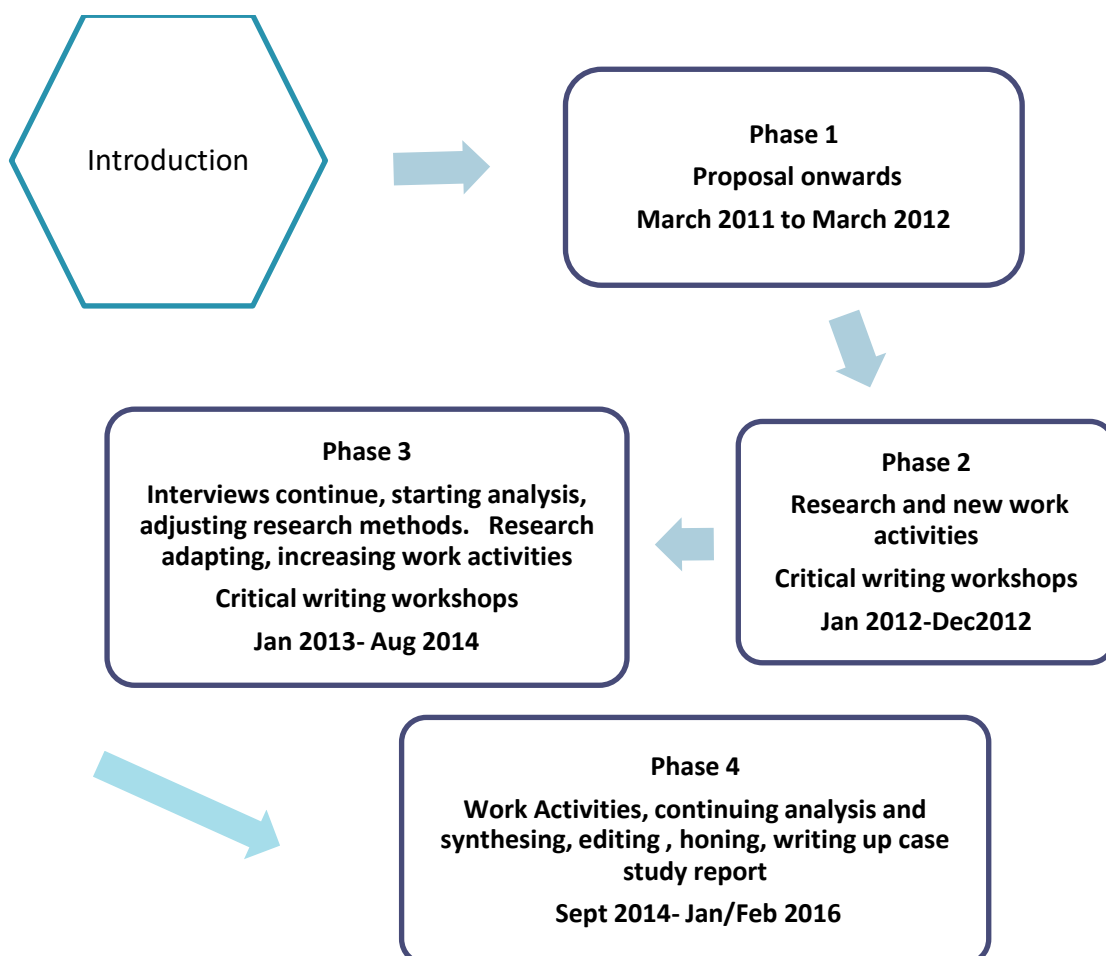
## **Conclusions**

In this chapter, the methodological approaches were critically reflected and reasons given for the adaptation of my research design. My positionalities and ethical stance underpinned my research. My methodological approaches enabled me to adapt and remain flexible. I progressed and gained increased understanding about what was happening in the real world. There was increasing change, economic recession and new social challenges concerning ageing and longevity. This meant my research became wide-ranging, relevant and complex. There was not a linear pathway but a tortuous changing, iterative one, where outcomes and work activities were unknown, unfolding and emerging over time. However, my research had strong underpinning structures including aims, objectives and outcomes, the case study design, protocol and question matrix. The next chapter concerns various activities and research I was involved in over five years.

## Chapter 4 Project Activity

### Introduction

Chapter 3 showed the methodological approaches for my research and reasons why a multi-methodology was necessary complemented by an exploratory case study approach. A variety of methodological approaches were used to design the research so that the research was robust, transparent and coherent work-based research which adapted over time as my work became more secure. It became an exploratory case study enabling the three aspects of my research to come together. This operational chapter explores the project's four phases from March 2011 when I was preparing for carrying out interviews with some active older people who were choosing to dance, getting involved in new work activities and preparing the research project proposal until the research activities ended in January/February 2016 and the report was being written up. I was involved in a range of local and national activities. This chapter gives insights concerning work and research activities.



#### **4.1 Phase 1 March 2011 to March 2012**

##### **Preparation for research project and work activities**

In March 2011, my research proposal was prepared. I had successfully set up a community choir. I was rehearsing each week in Company A and was occasionally performing. Stakeholder B was the dance-director and led sessions. I had carried out an evaluation report for Vivacity's first project which included a survey. I used this experience, together with my intention to interview active older people who were dancing, to develop a mixed-methodological approach for my research proposal design.

I applied for a grant to create Vivacity and invited Stakeholder B to facilitate sessions. The evaluation report was well-received locally. Later Amans (2013) used this report in her "Dance and Ageing" book (p205) where she described how Vivacity, a small grassroots organisation was created and gained funding. I secured another year's funding from a private bequest. Stakeholder B continued as facilitator. We had a good working relationship and were considering with another dance artist whether we might organise a local dance festival. My other work activities included being a Bridge advisor and blue-sky thinking with Stakeholder A.

I had given a seminar presentation concerning setting up Vivacity and bringing people from diverse backgrounds together to dance at "Facing the Future: Creating the Age-Friendly City" conference at Manchester in November 2010. Manchester had recognition in the first wave of the WHO's "Age-Friendly City programme".

I sought the advice from dance practitioners/providers 1-3 about my research project. All agreed my research would be beneficial especially as I was an older person, had access to others, I was interested in extending dance provision but did not have practitioners' vested interests.

I reflected on work possibilities that were worthwhile and within my resources. I considered managing more Vivacity sessions in other locations, especially after some older people approached me suggesting they would like similar dance



activities outside London. However, I made the decision not to do this because I had experience setting up small community organisations, it required travelling and familiarising myself with other locations and it would be time consuming and managing from afar. Another possibility involved producing a tool-kit for setting-up grassroots community and/or dance activities but there were others available.

I needed time and energy to continue managing Vivacity, develop my dance performing capabilities, use my leadership and networking skills to advise and collaborate with others and use my positionality, skills and knowledge to best advantage for my research.

My “Future Communities” project had raised my awareness of issues that might influence the future. The Beatles song, in The Preface, inspired me to find out how “active older people” perceived themselves and ways others perceived them. During this phase, I had no intention to scope dance or choreography as it was beyond the boundaries of my research because my research was focussed on meanings and reasons older people were choosing to dance not about the dance activities themselves.

I led two Bridge Roundtables “Widening Opportunities in Creative and Performance Arts” in London and Liverpool during June 2011 (See F13) having responsibility for the administration, liaising and chairing of the events. I chaired them by creating an empathetic listening environment (Kline 2002) encouraging participants to learn by providing space and time to listen to each other in turn and dialogue. Both Roundtables had 10-15 participants from community organisations, health and social care, arts practitioners/providers, academics and researchers. Each roundtable was unique with different participants involved, creating their own dialogues. Ideas entwined and wove around to create new findings. New ideas emerged that could inform participants future activities. The Roundtables encouraged networking and building work-friendships. Evaluations showed they had been worthwhile and some participants stayed in contact afterwards. Bridge directors and advisors planned to take the Roundtable outcomes forward. However, the strategic business plan Stakeholder A and I drafted was not implemented. Neither Stakeholder A nor I could concentrate sufficient time and effort to make it happen. Stakeholder A and other directors

were participating in European Projects and his personal circumstances changed. My other work activities and DProf research were becoming increasingly time-consuming and demanding. This had implications for my DProf research because if the strategic plan had become dominant, my work would have involved alternative activities and my research would have been different.

Local riots in August 2011 caused me to reflect on the value of researching active older people dancing when some young people had no positive future prospects. I acknowledged that creative, cultural activities bring meaning and purpose to people's lives, younger or older, and encourage social cohesion, bringing generations together.

I continued learning more about creativity, arts and the mature mind (Cohen 2000, 2005, 2007) and research methods for work-based projects. This included mixed-methodology (MMR) (Cresswell, 2012) that was applicable to a wide range of applied social research using the integration of data from different qualitative and quantitative methods. This methodology was less concerned with justifying academic and philosophical terms but recognised pragmatically that different research questions and requirements for policies necessitate different methods (Fielding 2010) and choosing what appears to be best from diverse sources, systems or styles (Teddie & Tashakkori 2011). I did mind-mapping and PESTLED analysis looking at the political, economic, social, technological, environmental and developmental considerations; strengths and weaknesses of older people wanting to dance and provision available.

Bridge advisory work continued but was faltering. Stakeholder A's personal responsibilities and life-style continued to change, as were mine. I concentrated on managing Vivacity, my dancing and research.

#### **4.2 Phase 2 March 2012-December 2012**

In March 2012 my research proposal was accepted and my work activities began to become more secure and varied.

**The Approved Programme title:** was "Interpreting the experience of active older people participating in creative dance".

**The Project title was:** “When I’m 64 I want to dance! The influence of creative dance in active older people’s lives”

I began planning my interviews for active older people who were dancing. My dancing and performing increased and managing Vivacity continued. My proposal was selected for display on the university website and shared with others.

### **Dancing and Vivacity**

Company A was developing well and becoming more ambitious. I enjoyed the challenge and dancing with committed older dancers. Our performances included “Dancing Voices” a largescale dance and music event performed at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank in July 2012 and SAGACITY, an older dancers’ festival, July 2012, a dance festival in a North London borough and a flash mob in Islington.

Vivacity sessions were well attended and managed effectively. I developed a website and good promotional materials. Further funding was needed to continue after summer 2012. I created a business plan (based on Appendix 7) showing strategies for future development. This made me critically reflect on achievements and potential developments for the future. I had unsuccessfully applied for a Lottery “Awards for All” funding. The evaluation said they considered Vivacity was an arts organisation continuing to offer similar activities rather than a new community project. I sent a grant application to the Arts Council, but feedback was that Vivacity was a small grassroots community organisation facilitated by a dance-artist but not artist-led. This illustrates ways small grassroots organisations can be played-off between funding bodies and illustrates silo-thinking, separating arts and community organisations. I gave feedback to Stakeholder B who successfully applied for a grant for Company A.

Securing funding for Vivacity was disheartening. There was not yet sufficient joined-up thinking across organisations at local and national levels. I concentrated on offering quality sessions locally. I had increased awareness from my research that decision/policy makers were seeking solutions for social issues to enable people to come together and lead fulfilled, healthy lives. I contacted the local

authority sports and leisure department who initially offered help writing business plans and grant applications but I knew how to do these activities because of my previous work experience, I needed to know how to get gain funding.

Meanwhile, I successfully applied for a grant to organise an intergenerational project during BIGDANCE 2012 and collaborated with the Heads of a local primary and special school learning campus to plan an “International Dance Olympiad” event. Vivacity’s facilitator/stakeholder B could be paid to lead some workshops at the school campus where Vivacity dancers including myself, volunteered and enjoyed creating dances with some pupils. I worked with the Head Teachers and school staff to confirm their contributions and I supported Stakeholder B. The final performance included dancing in spaces around the new school building followed by a performance with a large audience of over 500 children parents and teachers enjoying an afternoon celebrating dance. Children and school dance-tutors performed dances from around the world, a young adult community group and children with learning and physical disabilities performed and Vivacity dancers and children performed a suite of prepared dances based on Olympics themes. This inspiring, fun afternoon was a good example of successful collaborating and intergenerational working at local level.

In June 2012, I gained Community Development Foundation (CDF) funding approved by a local neighbourhood board. This was a small matched funded grant. It meant, in future, I would volunteer. My management role was unpaid and my hours counted towards matched-funding. Less funding was available for facilitator fees. Stakeholder B left to concentrate on developing Company A. Vivacity participants wanted to continue. We decided we could form a performance group. Participants could volunteer to perform if they wanted. Performing would benefit the community because older people would be seen performing positively, therefore challenging perceptions of older people as passive, marginalised, vulnerable people. This volunteering counted towards matched funding and widened the purpose of the core open sessions. The trustees and book-keeper’s hours were match-funded because they were volunteers. The new arrangements began in the autumn 2012. Two new dance-artists agreed to work together for a single facilitator’s payment to gain experience and one became Vivacity’s long-term dance-artist and the other gained employment elsewhere. The grant was

secured for one year, progress was evaluated and funding reapplied for annually for two further years. There was no financial certainty, but Vivacity could continue as a successful grassroots organisation meeting its aims with support from local people.

### **Networking and Boundary spanning**

The following are examples of my work activities that involved networking and boundary spanning.

In 2012, a research project was initiated by Claremont Project, Islington. I was invited to be an advisor. I was a Claremont member, regularly attended dance sessions there and was enthusiastic about its insightful vision and ways older people could access art activities. The research report “Flourishing Lives” (Oliver & Kelly 2013) contained detailed findings. I contributed several ideas and gave comments on the draft. My practice, research and working life were all informing one another.

I became involved in some North London Citizens meetings and activities. I introduced a Citizen UK director to another person in my network who was Chief Executive of a national research charity specialising in older people and intergenerational activities. The three of us had a constructive meeting and subsequently they participated on a project, joint working for mutual benefit. This was an example of networking and boundary spanning. There were also some discussions with stakeholders A&B because there was potential for taking forward work concerning dance and arts.

I gave a presentation about my research to a group of elderly feminists who were responsive and encouraging. They suggested ideas about older people as audiences and thought my research would be useful

### 4.3 Phase 3 January 2013-August 2014

#### Work activities

During phase 3, Vivacity continued to successfully attract people from different social and cultural backgrounds. Its core activity continued to be open sessions, participants enjoyed dancing together and extending their dance capabilities. Our new facilitator developed positive, trusting relationships with all who attended and her approach and choreography were appreciated.

A volunteer performance group was launched in December 2012 (See F11). The Deputy Lieutenant for Haringey & Enfield attended. She commented

*“...I enjoyed the company, the skills, enthusiasm and warmth. It is so important for us all to have interests outside our homes and your group certainly show how they benefit and give to others. The instruction was excellent and the fun and friendliness was quite apparent” (Email Dec 2012)*

During sessions, our facilitator created structured improvisations with us that were developed, rehearsed and later performed when we were invited to events. During Phase 3 performances in different venues included

- a local primary school, the children and teachers watched Vivacity Dancers perform and then it was repeated and everyone joined in a positive intergenerational experience.
- SAGACITY (with other dance groups from London and the SE), part of Capital Age Festival. This was a big achievement and increased the group's confidence about performing.
- Alexandra Palace 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration (July 2013).
- A large Christmas event for a local pensioners' organisation. (Dec 2013).
- I managed a Salsa workshop collaborating with a Salsa charity and another local dance organisation offering older people's line-dancing. It brought different older people from the neighbourhood together and the charity met its aim to promote Salsa dancing.

Although Vivacity was not a performing company, and it was not possible to hold extra rehearsals because of limited resources some Vivacity dancers enjoyed performing and this promoted positive images of older people dancing.

Performance sequences were developed during sessions. This demonstrated the talents and commitment of our facilitator and her working style. She used older people's ideas as well as her own and made sure everyone was confident and involved. These experiences informed my research and learning so double loop learning continued.

I became a founder member of Haringey Dance Forum. It was chaired by an officer from the borough's Leisure and Sports department. It took time to become established. Its purpose was to encourage local networking, sharing ideas, raise dance's profile locally, gain funding and resources, and support training so more local dance activities would become available. The first meeting was haphazard and most participants lacked committee and boundary spanning skills. Their organisations had limited resources and attendees' interests and priorities were disparate. My position within the forum shifted over time. At the first meeting, I held back. I felt an outsider and did not want to impose on mainly young enthusiasts who led dance activities in schools or running their independent dance organisations. I was older, working in a voluntary capacity, managing a small one-session-a-week grassroots dance organisation for older people. Older people's dance was not a high priority locally. Reflecting on this I realised I also lacked confidence about my new working life and ways I was perceived by others. I built good working relationships with some members including one, who at my invitation, later joined the AAA creative arts and older people working group.

Vivacity received a local Tottenham Active grant to continue during 2015-2016 because of information I gained from attending the Forum. This is another example of the importance of local networking so that grassroots organisations have the information needed to apply for resources.

I continued rehearsing and performing in Company A. During this phase, our performances included an event at Chelsea Theatre and in a department store in Westfield Shopping Centre in East London (July 2013) and the Edinburgh Fringe (August 2013). Company A dancers were performing choreographed works to a

high standard. This was challenging and enjoyable. I felt fortunate to be part of a talented older people's performing company.

I participated in an intergenerational dance project organised by a dance artist from The Place. This multi-media dance project was challenging and enjoyable.

In August 2013, I left Company A. In September 2013, I was invited to become a member of Company B (a pseudonym). The dance director worked with the dancers to create innovative choreography. She was also Vivacity's dance-artist.

I could not attend Rambert's Mercury Movers sessions because they were held on the same morning I managed Vivacity. Demand for these sessions was high. Another session was organised on a different morning. I joined immediately. Both sessions attracted people locally from S.E. London and other boroughs and beyond. There were waiting lists for both sessions.

I continued networking and boundary spanning including giving a presentation at a London Intergenerational Network meeting in February 2013. By attending and/or presenting at relevant seminars and forums I was learning more and participating in joint-working with others as well as promoting older people's dance.

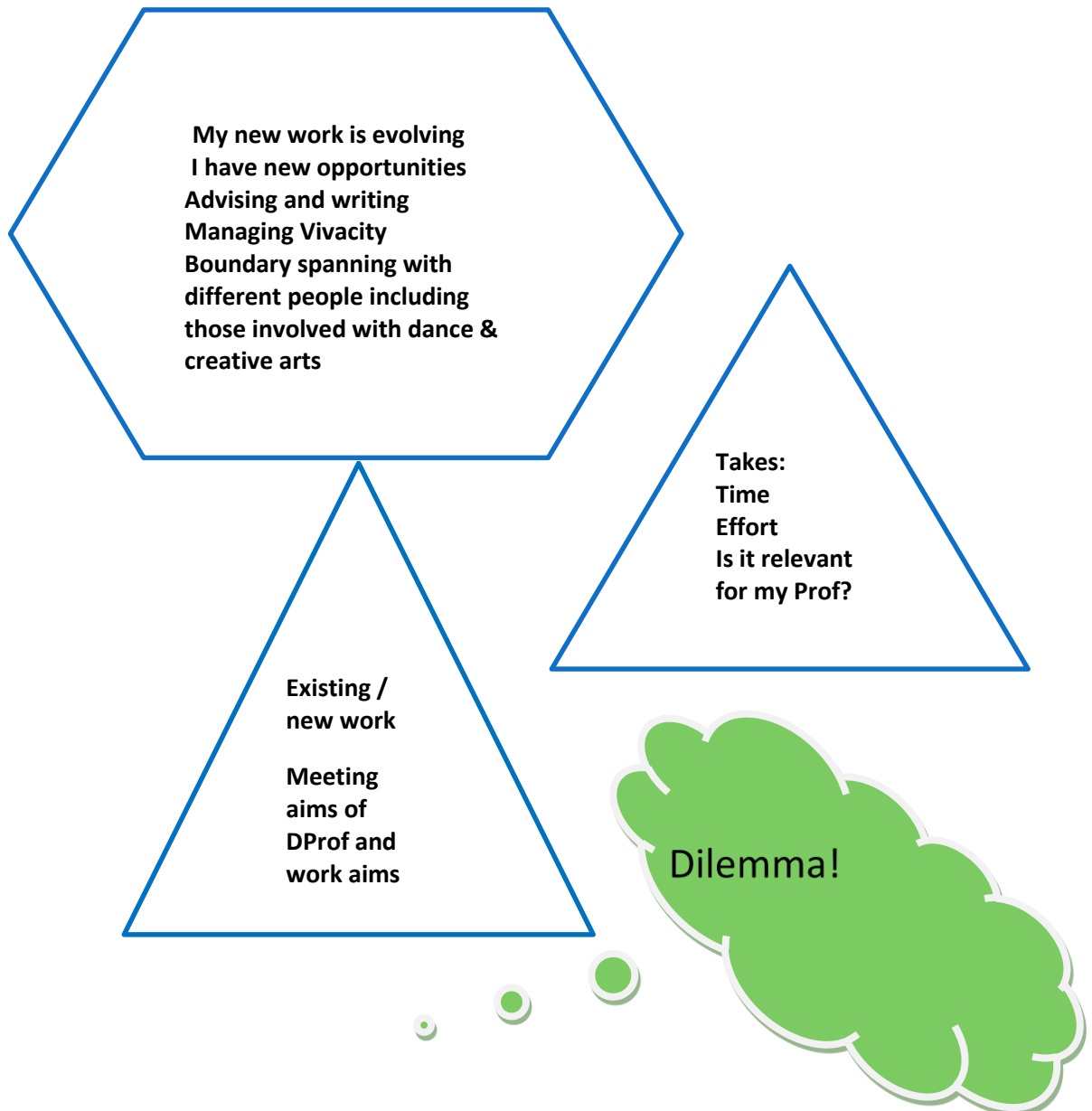
I wrote a fact sheet about Vivacity (Appendix 1) which was included on the AAA website. I attended the first meeting of the AAA older people and creative arts working group in March 2014 contributing as an older person/dancer and a manager of a grassroots dance organisation. At the meeting, I dialogued with people from larger arts organisations and felt confident contributing because I had wide ranging awareness about ageing and arts from my desktop research and various seminars and conferences I was attending. I was invited to become co-chair in July 2014

An article about Vivacity appeared in "Sardines" a national magazine (Appendix 5) promoting ideas about my research and the benefits of older people dancing.

### **A turning point**

Figure 8. below, diagrammatically shows my thoughts and feelings and what I needed to take into account at this stage of my research. I was becoming more involved but aware I did not want to become overwhelmed.





## **Illumination!**

**Evolving work ought to inform my DProf and provide opportunities for developing my work further. This will affect my research and in turn my work. However, I must not spread myself too thinly and any work must be directly relevant so I can proceed. All my work needs to flow forward. I can take advantage of opportunities and also take risks. This work then contributes towards evidence and data for my research's critical reflection. If I do not do this I am not taking full advantage of my unique personal position and the responsibilities I have towards those who are involved in what I am doing. If I do not explore these opportunities the aims of my work will not be met.**

**Figure 8: Work Activities, reflexivity, dilemmas and illumination**

I submitted an article to the Laban Guild Magazine (Appendix 5) to inform members about my research. I wanted to find out from others what might be considered acceptable. I was unaware of the “politics” and positioning of Laban’s heritage, how it related to ways dance was now being taught in higher education and its relationship with professional contemporary dance performance and Community Dance. My article suggested there was increased interest in older people’s dance. Laban principles might be useful for dance students and dance practitioners’ career development if they were going to work with older people in the future. Laban principles encourage creativity and individuality using space, different qualities and dancing relationships. These might support the development of older people’s dance capabilities, dance as a process and performance.

I received some interesting feedback following the article, including from three experienced trainers (dance provider/practitioners 5-7) who were interested in extending their organisation’s activities. Many of their dance practitioner/leaders used Laban principles in their dance-exercise sessions. The meeting was an interesting exchange of ideas. They thought my research could build bridges and be useful. We discussed possibilities including networking. In July 2013, I attended a summer school at University of Gloucester on Women, Ageing and the Media (WAM). (See F15c). I wanted to promote older women differently from the usual media stereotypes and step outside my comfort zone and see how academics received my developing research and to learn from them. This was my first attempt at presenting my “research in progress” to academics from related but different disciplines. Delegates came from UK and Europe. There was networking, dialoguing and socialising. Topics discussed were wide ranging. The seminar confirmed why I had to remain focussed. My research had relevance for numerous academic topics and disciplines. I presented and spoke directly to delegates on my proposed mixed-methodology, research findings in progress and various photos. I realised, although I was not working in a regular academic environment, my research was accepted by younger academic researchers.

I presented a prize-winning poster “Some Key Thought Processes During my DProf Journey to Capture Boundaries Whilst Creating and Experiencing New Work” at the University post-graduate summer conference. (See Appendix 8). It included the main question grid and also a preliminary analysis of possible topics

and themes (see Table 4 below). This was a starting point for later analysis and interpreting that took place during Phase 4.

### Research Activities

By December 2012, my awareness and experiential learning had increased. The potential of my research began to widen. I was pleased it was openly and honestly reflecting what I was doing and following interests and taking advantage of my positionalities. I devised a table and Venn diagrams, which were later included in a poster I created for the 2013 university summer conference. (See Appendix 8). In January 2013, I devised the main question and sub-question grid, which remained an underpinning tool guiding my research.

The grid headings are repeated here for readers' reference

Individual	community/ national level,
Dance	change and images

As well as increasing my various work activities, I was also preparing my research activities.

I created and piloted an "aide-memoire grid" (Appendix 3) and piloted it to confirm that it could be used effectively. The grid worked well. It was not prescriptive and allowed for flexibility when covering topics. It was a useful tool that enabled me to conduct semi-structured conversational interviews. Individualised data could be gathered systematically using a flexible approach lasting approximately 1 to 1½ hours.

I prepared invitation letters and consent forms (See appendix 4). Each person was invited and chose when and where to meet.

Interviews began in July 2012 continuing until August 2013; each was recorded. I discretely referred to the aide-memoire grid during conversations and interviewees spoke most of the time and our conversations flowed well. My interjections such as

“right”, “yes”, were encouraging but not judgemental. I used the IPA idiographic approach where interviewees bring their own particular perspectives. I gained new insights and understanding about phenomena within particular contexts (Smith 2009). This approach ensured similar topics were included within all conversations. The interviews were relaxed, friendly, some included laughter especially where common understandings were shared.

### **Eliza**

E: I started being told I was too old when I was actually 37 going on 38 and I applied to do a nursing course and I was too old then and I fought against it and I was accepted (Laughter)

When I wanted to delve deeper, I asked supplementary questions so that richer data emerged.

### **Maria**

M: I hate getting old. (very strongly)

J: All right OK

M: That the, you know

J: and can you say a little bit more about that what you mean by that

M: you are helpless in so many things, so many things I would like to do inside the house and in the garden and I can't manage it any more.

J: Right (gently) Are there any things are good about this phase of your life?

M: Well it makes me more tolerant. I think. Yes, that's it.

J: In what kind of ways?

M: I can understand how people feel. Yeh

J: Hmm it gives you more understanding?

M: Definitely, definitely,

I had considered conducting second interviews immediately after dance sessions so interviewees could express their feelings about dancing just as Stinson et al (1990) had done. However, I decided this was unnecessary because everyone had expressed themselves easily and I was collecting sufficient rich data.

On 30<sup>th</sup> April 2013. I visited the SW city arts centre to observe Hazel's dance session. Prior to this I invited her to select three participants from different backgrounds who were willing to have conversations with me. I sent invitations and consent forms via her.

I returned in August 2014 and interviewed Hazel, recording our conversation.

Having 11 interviewees had worked well and was sufficient.

Audio-recordings were transcribed and analysed carefully. I respected each person's contribution and their individuality shone through. The individuals' data in Chapter 5 illustrate differences and ways conversations varied. As the interviewer, I did not impose my ideas nor sought pre-conceived ideas. I wanted to learn from each person. I did not want "strapline" data but qualitative narrative texts with rich insights.

I was part of the conversational interviews. I did not make notes but remained focussed listening, observing and conversing. This enabled me to transcribe each interview accurately. I stepped back and reflected on each conversation and relived them as I heard recordings. I transcribed the interviews using a word-processor pedal. I learnt to rewind and re-listen, so I could type at a speed to produce accurate transcriptions. Transcriptions were made of all eleven interviews. It was not essential to transcribe them all, but they were interesting and each person's transcript had unique contributions as well as commonality with others. I included pauses and interjections (uhms, ahs,) by dots, so that rhythm and style of each person's language was explicitly captured. This was important because I wanted readers to feel confident that data was accurate and to do justice to the interviewees who had been generous with their time, commitment and participated actively in our conversations.

I explored Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Smith (2009) suggests that IPA is achieved in different ways such as a three-step approach where each interview is a "case". I experimented, analysing a single transcript using her approach, systematically making notes and comments three times, based on

- description,

- language used
- deeper meanings.

This enabled me to reach new levels of understanding and interpretation as connections, ideas, themes and concepts emerged. However, this approach amassed huge quantities of notes from the raw data

I used NVivo 10 software for analysis using “Qualitative Data Analysis with NVivo10” (Bazeley & Jackson 2013) as a step-by-step reference guide that enabled me to analyse and interpret transcripts effectively using the software to create nodes (bins) during the coding process.

Simultaneously, I kept lists of possible topics from my work activities and desk-top research. This deductive approach kept track of possible ideas and topics that would assist analysing and synthesising later.

I kept a journal and memos on-line using another NVivo feature to capture my thoughts and ideas and continued to keep a reflective journal and write reflection notes about my different work activities.

NVivo10 enabled me to read the transcripts in different ways taking into account underlying meanings, language used as well as straight descriptions, so I had taken on board what I had learned from IPA, using software instead.

Relationships between my work activities, research design and methodology became increasingly problematic. I became involved in activities beyond my expectations and these became part of my research activities.

The questions concerning older people dancing, although important, were not sufficiently encompassing. Research outcomes (Table 1) involved influencing decision/policy makers and changing perceptions of older people and my new work contributed evidence towards this. There were opportunities to include within my work-based research my new work activities and professional practice and to reflect critically on what I was achieving now I was involved in doctoral level research. I needed to resolve this issue.

I was confident meaningful findings and themes would emerge that linked with my desktop research. I decided examples of the interviewees' data would remain an essential part of my research. I created a new time plan and considered whether a case study methodological approach might be useful.

I gave a well-received presentation about my evolving methodological approach at the university summer conference 2014. I understood the benefits of using my nodes for analysis and interpretation, rather than using all the raw interview data, amassed notes and live evidence, which obviously was unmanageable. Rich data was accessible through the nodes and I could use these for illustration and for enlivening my research. I could manage and manipulate these as necessary.

I read "How to Tame your PhD" (Mewburn 2012) which helped me understand I had reached a "concept threshold". I needed time and space before consolidating and before further analysis and interpreting took place; allowing themes, findings and recommendations to emerge. I began drafting and redrafting sections of chapters for my report.

I spent time learning more about case study methodology. My work activities were central to my research but I recognised how much more there was still to do. How context and literature, findings and project activity, discussion and interpretations needed to relate to one another and how disparate ideas and my research activities needed to come together. I was determined to succeed.

### **Writing and Critical Reflection workshops through Literature.**

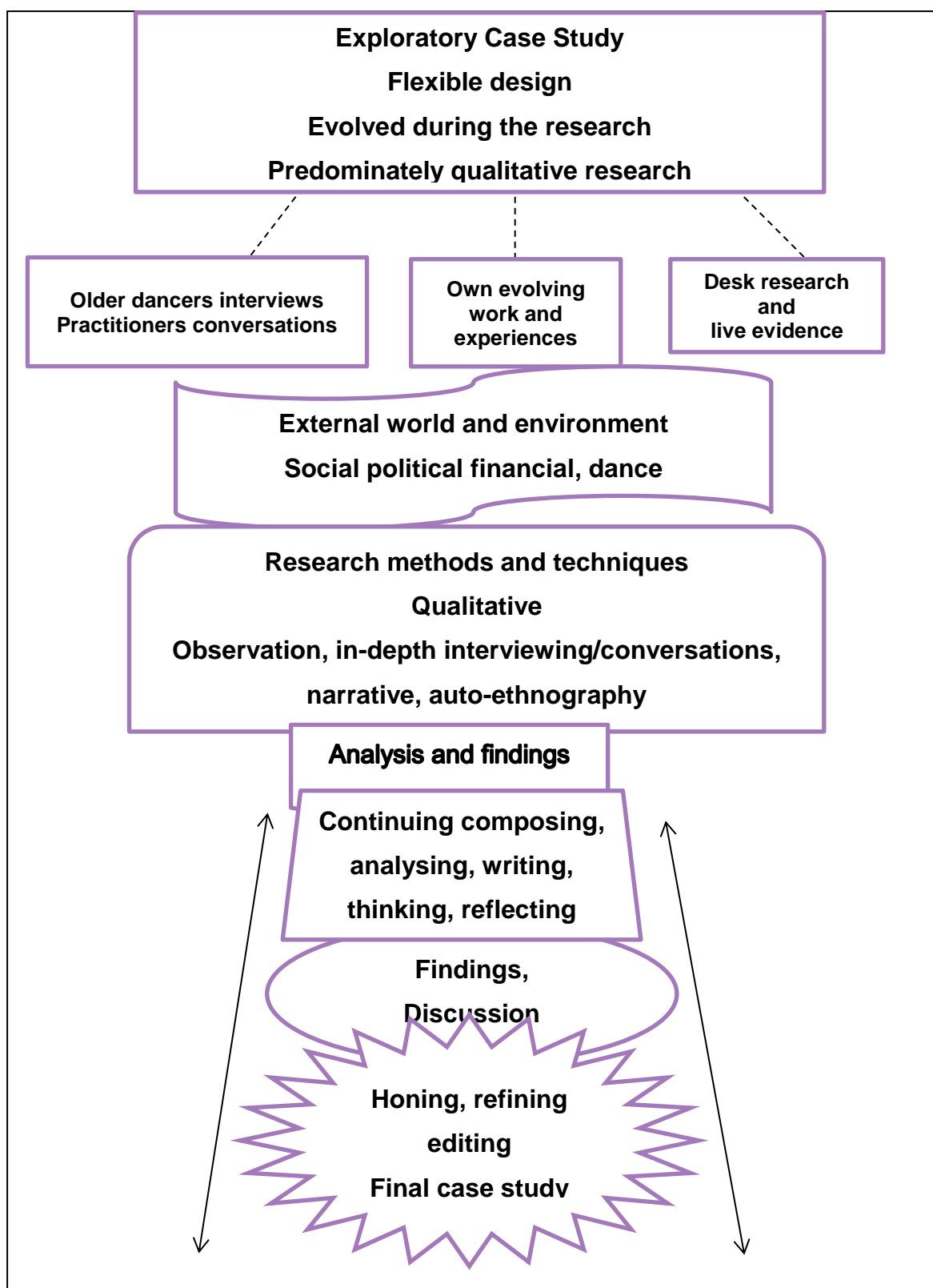
From November 2012 – July 2013, I participated in a "Writing and Critical Reflection through Literature" course at the university. This enabled me to develop my own writing voice and ways to organise and put together my research report so that I could communicate confidently and produce an authoritative report that was interesting and informative for the audiences that I hoped would benefit from reading my research report and put ideas into practice as I was creating new knowledge. This learning motivated me to write with clarity and originality.

## **Going forward**

Yin (2014) suggests a case study needs a protocol (Appendix 9) to use as a tool. I wrote one using ideas from Yin's template. This enabled me to check ideas and reflect on what I had achieved so far, and consider ways to proceed. I did not use all suggested template headings because I had completed some sections or I knew enough about them such as "audiences" and "resources". The protocol became another underpinning tool. I modified the project's aims, objectives and outcomes/goals so they realistically met my new circumstances and ways I was designing and carrying out my research (Table1). The coherent design and structure pulled all aspects of my research together (Figure 9).



The overall case study design:



**Figure 9** Case study and finalising the report

I continued to write deductive lists of topics and ideas. The challenge was to find a way to pull together the rich NVivo 10 data analysis with deductive themes that were emerging with my new experiential work, increasing desktop research and live evidence.

I used mind-mapping to think through and synthesise ideas. Mindmapping encourages “radiant thinking” (Buzan & Buzan, 2003), so conceptual frameworks for generating new ideas are created by your brain making choices, remembering and thinking creatively to reach decisions. It encourages automatic self-enhancing feedback loops. Ideas and transdisciplinary topics were beginning to come together. This creative process involved intuition, deep sub-conscious thinking and feelings as well as words, images, memories and determination.

## **4.4 Phase 4 September 2014 – Jan/Feb 2016**

### **Work Activities**

I continued to manage Vivacity effectively. Our facilitator/dance-artist continued to lead sessions successfully.

After writing a blog comment about the importance of older people having opportunities to learn at all stages of their lives, I was invited to give a seminar at Ransackers AGM (<http://www.ransackersassociation.org.uk/>). to inform members about my DProf research and promoting older people's learning. I became a supporter of the organisation because its aims aligned with my values promoting innovative learning for older people especially those who had not participated in higher education earlier in their lives. I developed a good relationship with the chair and attended some Ransackers meetings and some Vivacity dancers performed at their following Ransackers AGM. Vivacity volunteers shared their enjoyment of dancing <https://vimeo.com/125555971> with delegates. A lively discussion followed. The Ransackers delegates joined in a "wind-down session". Vivacity dancers had promoted older people's dance and each person confidently spoke to the delegates about what dance meant to them. It was a sociable event where we got to know one another more.

In July 2014, Vivacity performed at an arts festival in a local park, running an intergenerational workshop that gave another opportunity to promote older people dancing and contribute to a community cultural activity. We also performed with an older people's choir at the south bank and this was a positive social outing enjoyed by all who attended. (See Appendix 12 Telling Incident 2)

After three years of Community Development Foundation (CDF) funding, I secured a year's grant from Tottenham Skills Active from the local council's Sports and Leisure department. The open sessions remained popular. Dancers came as regularly as they could, new people joined and were welcomed. I continued developing good working relationships with Council officers, some local NHS health commissioners, Haringey Dance Forum and some local artists.

I continued performing with Company B. This small group of committed older dancers was creating new performance repertoire. I continued to regularly attend Rambert's Mercury Movers sessions. These two dance activities led to performing at the Elixir Festival organised by Sadlers Wells.

In July 2014 I was invited to co-chair the AAA Creative Arts and older people group, working closely with the DWP secretary and a co-chair [www.ageactionalliance.org/theme/creative-arts/](http://www.ageactionalliance.org/theme/creative-arts/). Representatives from various national and grassroots organisations met quarterly to network, champion creative arts and older people. Each AAA group produced its own agenda and organised itself. There were 14 different working groups. I chaired meetings using Cline's (1999) thinking environment model. All who attended were attentive and respectful to others, with time to think and communicate. I thought this approach would be effective having previously chaired the Bridge Roundtables. Meetings were non-competitive, enjoyable and productive. Each ended with an evaluation where everyone in turn commented. A challenge was that different combinations of people attended each time. Cohesive ways of working developed; there was increased networking with some members collaborating between meetings.

I gave a presentation about active older people's creative dance to AAA/Active Life Styles working group because I had commented on their blog. I emphasised dance activities were often marginalised within the sports sector I was invited to continue participating in the group.

I became involved in the planning of an Older People's Arts Conference in London and advised several local organisations about arts activities locally.

Three of us from the AAA creative arts group acted as peer evaluators for UK Urban Ageing Consortium Report (2014) that made recommendations to peers in Brighton. This involved visiting the city and learning from each other. The evaluation was disseminated and included some of my contributions. At the London, interim Age Friendly City conference in March 2015, there was a presentation about the Brighton report. During the presentation, increasing the range of older people's dance activities was included. I spoke to the presenter afterwards. In Brighton, I had raised the need for different dance choices for older

people. This showed peer evaluations and boundary spanning were making impacts as new ideas were being disseminated around the country.

In November 2014, there was the first TEDxTottenham called “Beneath the Surface”. I was invited to be a presenter because I was known locally for successfully developing local community organisations over many years. The event’s aim was to inspire local people and others who had interests promoting positive aspects of Tottenham following the bad publicity caused by the 2011 disturbances. All TEDx events and presentations have to meet demanding, professional standards including being interesting, innovative, accessible and only up to 18 minutes long. This was a difficult challenge. My presentation brought together work experiences, knowledge gained from my DProf research and being a long-term local resident involved in voluntary community activities. I devised a strategy for presenting an interesting relevant contribution. The other presenters were young local entrepreneurs and development workers who gave interesting presentations about local regeneration and making use of local people’s talents. We worked well together as a team with the organisers and administrators and the event was successful. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ksRWurOqr24](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ksRWurOqr24)

During 2015, I became involved in some broader local social participation and cohesion activities. I made links with other local people so increasing my network and learned more about local arts and regeneration issues taking place. In May 2015 I was asked to inspire a group of young artists and share ideas about doing outreach arts projects locally. This increased my knowledge about ways younger artists were working in Tottenham. It was a positive, constructive meeting organised by LIFT Tottenham. I appeared in their promotional video. LIFT is bringing arts activities to people in Tottenham over the next six years. I attended their “Light in my Tottenham” exhibition and appeared in a video about it. <https://youtu.be/EEZ42fqgMVM>.

In central London, I attended were several conferences and seminars gaining new insights especially ways government departments and large organisations from different sectors were exploring ways to collaborate and work together. This was “transdisciplinarity in action”. This included two conferences: Public Wisdom (2015) and Centre for Positive Ageing “Redefining Ageing” (2014).

An industry-wide dance conference was held during 15-19 April 2015 "The Future: New Ideas: New Inspirations" indicating that new collaborations were happening within the dance performance world.

In March 2015, I addressed 80 occupational therapy students at a West London University to challenge perceptions, thinking about ageing positively and seeing patients and clients as individuals. I wanted these students starting on their careers to perceive their own ageing positively and to learn about "active older people's creative dance". Some of my research findings encouraged them. The evaluations were excellent and I was invited again in March 2016.

### **Research activities**

During this final phase, more work activities were incorporated. Ideas continued emerging from the different aspects of my work and research activities.

Bannerman (2009) suggests there is an "emergent premise" to creative work that often involves "recognition" the collision of the rational and the intuitive. He argues artists rely on their intuitive processes whilst working, and it has importance in everyday life. This was an interesting theory for understanding my writing process, bringing analysis and interpretations together and writing the final report was definitely a creative process as well as an analytical one. I relied upon intuition, previous and current knowledge and new learning. Rosemary Lee (2006) an influential choreographer and film-maker describes this intuitive, creative process well:

*"I am searching at times and at other times actively trying not to search so that thoughts can creep-up unawares. The idea, the dawning, the solution is often more of a discovery than a creation" (Lee 2006, p179)*

My ideas were connecting with related ideas from others working within wider academic and political/social contexts (Murray 2011). This reflexive approach enhanced my research activities and informed my work practice. I was learning through-and-on my practice and I was experiencing my own transformational

learning. As an autonomous thinker, my new work was affecting my thoughts and feelings and changing my points of view (Mezirow 1997).

My AAA creative arts co-chair suggested thinking about writing up research as if it was choreography

*“rehearse, refine, perform... rehearse until the Opening Night” (email Dyke 2015)*

At this stage I recognised the importance of Transdisciplinarity and the complexities of the challenge I set myself and realised my understanding about ageing, social participation and creative dance was now different from when I set out on my dancing journey.

My research complemented what was happening in the everyday world. It was taking longer than expected to interweave and pull the aspects of the research together, but some important innovative developments were aligning and coming together. My ideas were triangulating with reality. My theoretical understanding as well as my work experience grew. For example, Rambert held an intensive workshop day in October 2015 for Mercury Movers that included technique, creative dance and learning choreography. This was far beyond their original vision when they promoted “gentle exercise” for over 50s. They adapted their offering to meet the needs of those attending. The following week, a successful open-morning for professionals interested in older people’s activities to observe the dancers. Some delegates were surprised that older people could get up from the floor easily and move around the space proficiently. Professionals’ perceptions and negative stereotypes about “the elderly” were challenged.

Another example, as Vivacity’s manager, I was invited to lead a discussion with some local health professionals and older people suffering with mental health problems to show ways hobbies and interests including creative dance could benefit them. Some Vivacity volunteers went with me. The ex-patients responded well. The professionals were delighted. I was invited back following positive feedback. I was promoting ideas from my research and work practice and giving local people opportunities to share ideas and gain self-esteem and challenge perceptions about the capabilities of older people and ways they can dance.

## **Conclusions**

In this chapter, the four phases of the project activity were explored. It showed the operational activities of my work and research activities and the relationship between them. I was within my research as a work-based practitioner-researcher; double-looped learning influenced both work and research. Overtime, the first aspect of my research was interviews I had with 11 different active older people who were choosing to dance and later I was able to incorporate work activities facing challenges often with new colleagues and peers. The case study model enabled my research to progress as did transdisciplinary ways of researching and interweaving different topics together as they clustered in different ways whilst the external world was changing during times of social/political change. I was learning more. This reflexive approach with transdisciplinarity made my research dynamic, relevant and kept me motivated and engaged in what was a long analytic, interpretative process. This enabled themes and sub-themes to emerge as revealed in Chapter 5.



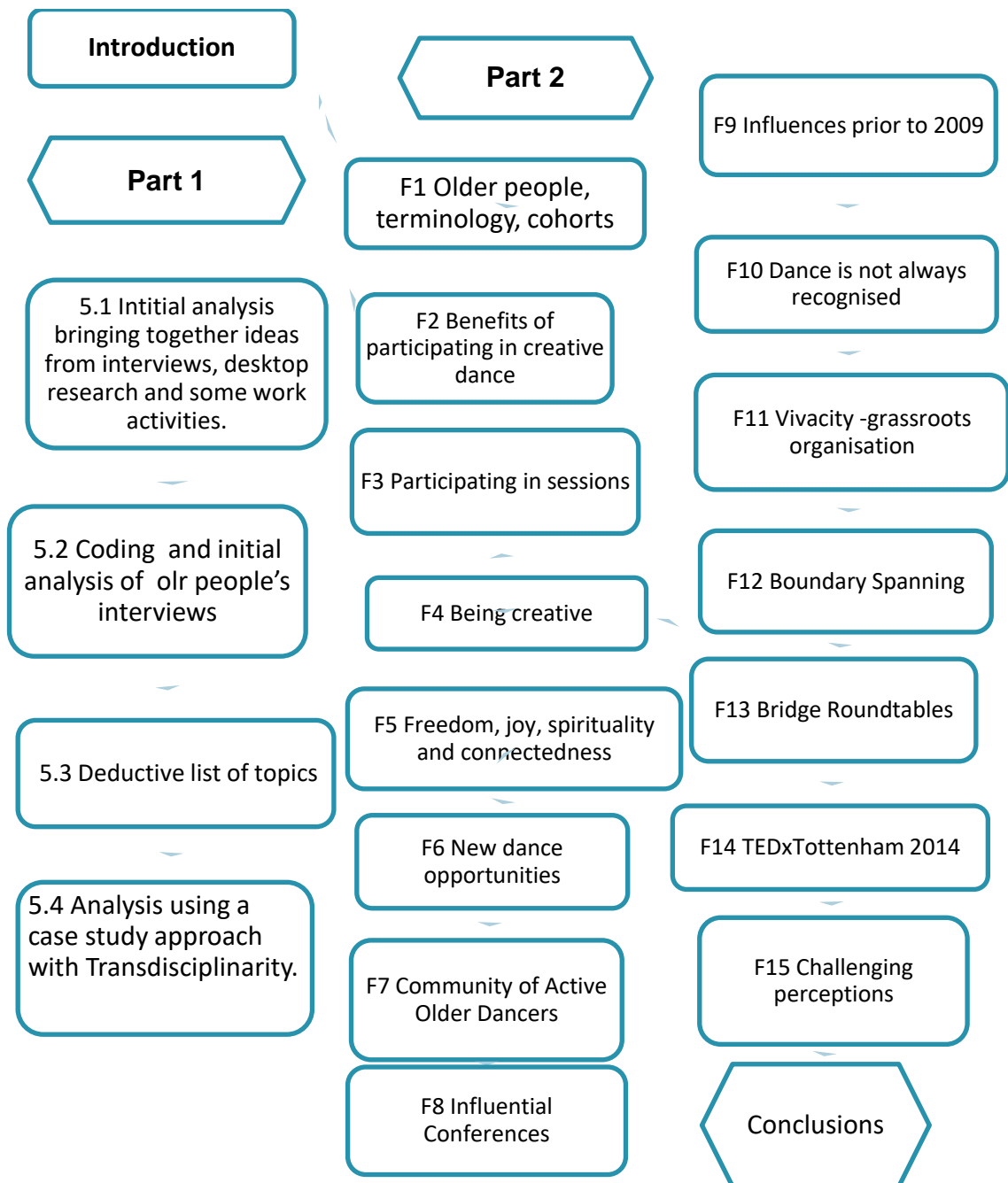
## **Chapter 5 Analysis and Interpretation, emerging themes and sub-themes leading to findings**

### **Introduction**

As outlined in Chapter 4 my research adapted overtime. It began with interviewing active older dancers and desk-top research and later incorporated varied work activities as they became more secure. This chapter is the largest one in my report.

There are two parts to this chapter.

- **Part one** is an analysis and interpretation of the three aspects of my research and the various research activities that adapted over time.
- **Part 2** has fifteen findings that emerged from the multi-methodological approach that included interweaving together the analysis and interpretation from the interviews, desk-top research, work experience and activities and live evidence.



## Part 1 Initial analysis

### 5.1 Initial analysis bringing together ideas from early desktop research, interviews and work activities

My research was exploratory I had no preconceptions concerning where my research might lead, especially as my work activities were initially insecure. I brought forward evidence from my previous experience, began interviewing and also gathered ideas and evidence from my new work experiences, informed by new learning from desktop research. This initial analysis of ideas at January 2013 is shown in Table 4 below. It is based upon the structure

Individual	community/ national level,
Dance	change and images

Also included in the table are relevant ideas from work-based activities skills such as leadership, involving and influencing and some topics that bridge across the four main themes such as creativity, wellbeing and political issues.

Work Based activities: Leadership, management, creating organisations, welcoming approach, Best Practice, Grassroots upwards, Boundary spanning, Community Agents, Funding Applications, CD60+, presenter, advisor, Involvement and influencing, Role model, researcher, champion for older people, older dancer, performing, intergenerational activities

## Individual

## Community/ National /International

Active,	LL Learning	Older people active in communities	Community Development	History, gerontology
Attitudes, values and beliefs	Mature Mind	Intergenerational activities	Active Retirement	Political, psychological , sociological
Meaning , self-esteem, confidence	Learning Styles Coaching, mentoring	Community Involvement	Age Friendly cities and neighbourhoods	Government, EU, International issues
Friendship	Creative Age	Arts in the Community	Regeneration and riots	Demographic changes
Identity	Flow – optimal experiences	"Flourishing Lives" – Day Centre provision project	Value for money, social value Austerity/credit crunch	Pensions, retirement, employment
Stage of life	Happiness, Meaningful Purposeful		Intergenerational Activities	Funding and grants
	Volunteering and citizenship		Positionality of dance activities across Government departments	Environmental Issues

## The Bridge – influencing the other areas – generic topics

Fitness	Performance	Dance Forms	Marketing and promotion
Communities of Interest	Audience	Wellbeing	Political Issues
Wholeness	Learning	Health	Feminist Issues
Creativity	Sports, Leisure, Arts	Responsibilities and needs	Terminology
Age – sociological and psychological	Culture and Couture Theory	Spiritual, ethical, moral, connectedness,	Modern – post modern, pluralism
Life Course	Diversity	Isolation- social cohesion	Global Issues

Older Dancers	Sociology of Dance,	Audiences	Images of older people in the media
What is Dance? Styles of Dance	The Body and Embodiment	Older people's dance improving images and participation?	Growing Old Disgracefully
Community Dance Sector	Professional Dance Attitudes	Role Models	New Forms of older people's dance
Benefits of Dance	Aesthetics		Choices
Previous Dance Experience	Acceptance of older dancers		Dance in the future
History and context of Dance	Older People Dance Companies		Breaking Down Barriers and silos
Older People's sessions and performance			Older people as consumers and users of services

**Dance** Table 4 Literature review and aspects of research and programme as at January 2013 onwards

**Image and Change**

## **5.2 Coding and initial analysis of older people's interviews**

My initial focus concentrated on my access to active older people who were choosing to dance. Each person for analysis was a “case” in their own right.

I wanted to research

- the experiences they gained from becoming involved in creative dance and the meanings they gave to their dancing.
- ways sharing interests in a similar phase of life might enhance wellbeing
- structure of dance sessions so that inclusion could be encouraged
- ways widening performance opportunities might promote more positive images of active older people and what they are capable of doing
- ways dance might contribute to changing attitudes at local, national social political levels and within performing arts.

Interviewees were asked to describe their present lives and their thoughts and feelings concerning relationships and being part of their local communities. Also discussed were their feelings about attending their dance sessions and their present phase of life, opportunities and concerns they had including being creative and their thoughts about the images and language used about older people. Finally, they are asked to say the best thing about being the age they were and what they wished for themselves and for the world. (See Appendix 3 for details).

As discussed in Chapter 4, initially I experimented with Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) method using Eliza's transcript as a pilot and learned that this enabled good themes to emerge. However, I decided it was not the right methodological approach. My in-depth conversations were not about traumatic, highly personal matters that were difficult for interviewees to express and share. Interviewees easily expressed themselves. IPA was intensive and I could see its benefits for some kinds of research. I decided it was too cumbersome for analysing and interpreting the interviews because such in-depth probing and interpretations was unnecessary and the paperwork would be overwhelming. I had limited physical space and was working alone. I had sufficient objectivity and distance, I was aware of my positionality within the conversations. I knew the content of the interviews because I had conducted and transcribed them carefully. This informed my NVivo analysis enabling me to read the transcripts in different ways, taking into account underlying meanings, language used as well as straight

descriptions. However, IPA produced vast quantities of paperwork. I decided it was worthwhile learning how to use NVivo 10 software but it took time to learn. My intention remained to analyse transcripts, gaining insights into the way interviewees were constructing and understanding their worlds.

The main question and sub-question matrix (Figure 6) and the interview aide-memoire question grid (Appendix 3) informed and gave structure and boundaries for the interviews. I was aware that content within the transcripts could be clustered and interpreted in different ways.

Whilst learning how to analyse data using NVivo10 I was interpreting the content. At this stage I did not want to limit myself or become overwhelmed. I had conducted the interviews, transcribed them and was familiar with them but I was aware that it was important not to become too prescriptive and subjective whilst coding data.

Bryony's transcript was coded first. Almost all her interview could be coded because it contained rich data that was clearly expressed. I continued making nodes (bins) from more transcripts. I gained more expertise as I became experienced although sometimes there were several nodes within small sections of raw data. This would mean large numbers of nodes could proliferate.

At this stage I considered this did not matter because I was still learning how to use the software and knew that later I could cluster nodes into parent and linked children nodes. Nodes at this stage were broad as shown below.

Name
Creativity
active body and mind
Effect on life
appreciate
Audience in
best thing about being the age you are
career
career and past life
challenges when dancing
community of dancers
connected to other people.
Dance
Dance types
Early dance experience
early life- schooling and initial work
emotions when dancing
family
Family relationships
five years' time
friendship
image. What is the active older person
intergenerational activities
Interview process and effects
learning
local community networks
new opportunities
other activities available for older people
performances
present dance commitment
present life - new business
present life family
relationships and the community.
How's your life at the present time scale 1-10
What does dance mean to you in your life now and how do you feel when you dance
stereotype
structure to my week
television
transition stage of life
what is an elderly person
what it actually means to you now
wish for the World
work activities
young dancers.
your life at the moment.

Once I learned how to move nodes and link them together, I could make trees with sub-categories and use the same nodes across transcripts. Small text sections could be interpreted differently for example, those about an individual could also be about dancing and general benefits. Nodes could overlap. In the early stages I coded almost all text from each transcript. I was not certain if this was right or not, but it was relevant and interesting. The number of nodes increased and I was capturing rich data under them. I consolidated and merged nodes into trees so that they became more manageable and themes would emerge.

The biggest branch of the tree related to "Dance", followed by "Benefits of dance", "Connectedness/community", "Life course", "New Opportunities", "Wish for self and the world" and "Image". I decided that once the first phase of coding was completed I could cluster nodes further and consider each node and data it contained. At this stage my research was like a helter-skelter or a photo being developed - now you see it, now you don't! - I did not know where it was leading but I continued enthusiastically.

Whilst coding the transcripts, it became obvious each interviewee's transcript highlighted the individuality of the person. For example, Maria's transcript contained wisdom gained from a long life caring for her family and maintaining her independence, whilst P1's portrayed the importance dance had played during his young life in Singapore, then later when he migrated to London and what it meant to him today. The joy and dance being important to him, bounced off the page!

Another node was "Transitions in life". Penny's was a good example of how I kept boundaries whilst interviewing her. She said she had been seriously ill 9 years ago. I thought this was a private matter and delved no further as it was confidential and would not be relevant to my research. Yildas was looking forward to doing things for her family once she left work and using her creativity when gardening and decorating her home.

I added a "Freedom" node because Penny had found freedom as she no longer had responsibilities for others and had moved from a small town to the SW City. Eliza, Bryony and Toni were also finding new freedom at this stage of their lives. I created a new parent node called "Dance Sessions" because other nodes could



cluster under it, including teaching, music and location. Clustering made coding more manageable. Too many nodes were clustering under “Dance” and this had to be honed further.

My confidence grew as I clustered nodes together. Gradually the node tree took shape and the data from the interviews was easily retrievable. It was surprising that some topics could be coded from each transcript such as “benefits of dance” whilst other topics emerged more gradually - like connectedness issues. “Ageing” was another parent node that included “transition”, “preparing for the future”, “being a grandparent”, “location” “relationship with work” “Ageism” and “preparing for living in later life”. However, it could also be clustered within “Life course”, linked with “connectedness” and relating to “community” and “family”.

I reached saturation point when I was no longer creating new nodes but there were refinements within existing nodes. I had coded all the data from the 11 transcripts and was pleased that all the voices from the 11 interviewees had been captured. This ended the first stage of the analyse and interpretation of the transcripts.

I continued clustering the nodes and at the same time kept notes on emerging themes. I was able to refer back to the raw data as required. I was being thorough. I wanted to do justice to the transcripts’ rich data. There was a wide range of experience from different backgrounds but there were similarities too. For example, Eliza had cared for relatives whilst working and caring for others and so had Toni, V1 and Maria had both become housewives after marriage.

I continued to merge nodes and make parent and linked child-nodes. An example of ways that nodes could be interpreted differently was those concerned with connectedness and community development. Connectedness covered social issues, spiritual and emotional aspects of life. This could include the meaning and purpose of life as well as ways individuals and groups relate to one another and form social groups. It became clear that I had to interpret carefully how best to code the data because my research could include both interpretations within different findings and sub-themes. For example, for communities to flourish people need to come together and share their interests and concerns. Where religious

groupings come together connectedness happens, when families meet and socialise together is another, but cultural activities, hobbies, sports and other interests, including dance activities, also bring people together. Communities of interest or practice i.e. people coming together to share and work or enjoy activities together can be beneficial. Interviewees were enjoying dancing together. Leisure activities, sports and arts activities could encourage people to feel part of a communities This had implications for the way I grouped nodes. "Connectedness" as an underlying theme (as it was at my research project proposal) could link with communities of interest, spirituality, individual benefits, community benefits, dance and image.

It was still too early to finalise my interpretations but I was beginning to recognise that themes and subthemes could emerge differently depending on ways the nodes were clustered. Different aspects of the interviewees' data shone through at different times and with different emphasis. It was like slippery jelly, being clear and then becoming elusive. I continued pruning and clustering nodes, so they became more manageable and coherent. Certain ideas cut across and interwove. I remained focussed. At this stage the skills needed were persistence, focussing, shrewdness and determination as much as intellectual ability and capability.

This led to collapsing the number of nodes from 28 parent nodes and 230 nodes in total, to 6 parent nodes and 122 as shown in the nodes Tree below. To do this I also produced a mindmap to think through ideas and make decisions. These became "Benefits" (age, dance, freedom and joy), "Dance" (types of dance, history, experience, family dancing, reasons, dance sessions, performing, as culture, young dancers ) "Images" (ageism, older dancers, older people, language, stereotypes, TV and media) "Connectedness" (family, community, community of dancers) "Creativity" (new opportunities, for the future, creativity whilst dancing) " Age and Life course" (Earlier life, life now and in the future), "work and volunteering" (past, present and in the future). There were links between these topics and themes were emerging. These topics and themes could make useful contributions towards new knowledge It was important to consider what could contribute to answering my main research question and sub-questions and what was interesting to me as a researcher and an older learner.

## Final Node Tree

### Nodes



## Nodes



## Nodes



This completed the analysis of the interviewees' data. I felt confident I had analysed it with respect and integrity. This was the first aspect of my research. I was aware that this analysis would also be brought together with the other aspects of case study research.

### 5.3 Deductive lists of topics

As mentioned, at the same time as coding the interviewees' transcripts, I kept lists of possible themes and topics. I was gathering key issues whilst coding transcripts combined with ideas from and my own experience and learning. This included such topics as dance can be transformational; the importance of friends and family; maintaining independence, social, emotional, wellbeing, self-esteem aspects when dancing and in this phase of life including, freedom and new responsibilities, optimism, hope and world views; dance sessions as a social activity and new interest; new responsibilities linked to transition in life; different kinds of dance and what different people like to watch and participate in. I took considered Cohen's four developmental stages of life and ways different people transition and move into

- re-evaluation,
- liberation,
- recapitulation, resolution and contribution,
- Encore – reflection and celebration

By June 2014 my deductive list was more far ranging and contained many possible ideas and themes that could be considered and developed for further analysis and interpretation as findings so that themes and subthemes that might contribute to recommendations.

This included

- **Connectedness**, spirituality, creativity, happiness, wellbeing, and examples of subthemes - neighbourliness, purpose and meaning of life, social cohesion, individuality
- **Dancers, active older dancers** (subthemes such as their desires, effect on their lives, building friendships and communities of interest, embodiment),

- **Active older people – Images and change** – lack of terminology, ageism, life course, work and retirement, role dance could play in changing images, independence, involvement of older people themselves, changing images in the media
- **Dance and culture** including embodiment and the right for all to dance; becoming active in own communities; potted history of dance especially what has happened in the last 30 years – post-modernism and the return to expressionism. New opportunities; Demand for more active older people's dance sessions and performance. The kinds of choreography that might be suitable for active older people; dance facilitators and dancers to build trust, respect; humour and taking risks; the problems dance has been placed in different sectors and implications for funding; increased government and voluntary sector initiatives. The need for more dance facilitators for active older people's dance activities, More choices and types of dance.
- **National and Community issues, social cohesion, funding and policies** including the ageing population, role of dance and participatory arts in health and arts now rising up political agendas, insufficient research concerning dance and its benefits, volunteering formally and informally, intergenerational activities, age friendly cities and neighbourhoods.
- **Own experiences** including creating and managing a small not for profit grassroots organisation, dancing and performing again, disseminating and influencing locally and nationally, using boundary spanning skills and networking, promoting older people and intergenerational activities, mentoring and sharing ideas.
- **Experiences as an older person participating in DProf programme** including reflection, reflexivity, my independence not tied to an organisation and finding my own voice as a researcher; learning style and incorporating rest of life, gaining confidence and authority and overcoming and/or accepting self-imposed "demons", incorporating life and work experience and achieving academic requirements.

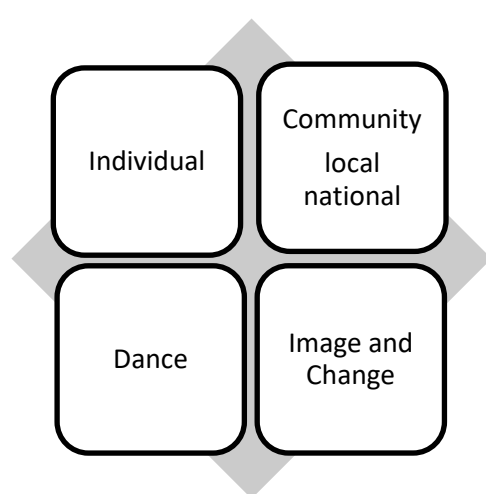
The lists above are examples of many ideas and thoughts I took into account. The challenge was how to bring different aspects of my research together.

## 5.4 Analysis using a case study approach with Transdisciplinarity.

From July 2014 I had to find ways to pull my research and intertwining topics together. The solution was staring at me. The research title could underpin the whole research project and act as another underpinning structural tool, complementing my other models, tools, tables and matrixes. This insight assisted analysing and writing up my report; enabling me to think in new ways to analyse, synthesise data and evidence.

### FROM

Framework 1 based on Figure 6



Framework1 bringing together evolving work and methodology from Jan 2013 – headings from question grid

### TO

Framework 2 based on Project title



Framework 2 used to organise research into a Case Study from July 2014



In consultation with my research project lecturer, I decided it was useful to focus my research further by amending “When I’m 64” in Framework 2 above to “challenging perceptions” which incorporated “images and change”. The final case study and research project title became:

**“Active Older People Participating in Creative Dance  
– Challenging Perceptions”**

This meant my research project title was no longer limited to chronological age and baby-boomers. This better reflected what my research had always been about. It brought further coherence about choices and participation. Everything was in place to pull the various aspects of my inquiry together.

I used Covey’s (2004) “sharpening the saw”. I paused and adapted my approach. This was challenging. I had vast amounts of data and I had started drafting some sections of my report. Eventually, all I had researched or was in process of researching, learning and experiencing would be brought together

My capabilities as a researcher, dancer and boundary spanner increased, I needed time to incubate and think through ideas at deep levels. Yin’s theories about writing case studies were helpful as he suggests finding your own way to write. This complemented the approach taken in the learning the criticality writing workshops I attended. Topics could interweave together in different ways. I had to analyse, interpret, hone down and merge topics to write a coherent report.

It is worth noting that writing transdisciplinary work-based research is challenging. The complexity of the topics and my various work activities needed to be tackled head-on rather than playing safe and concentrating just on my original initial research design which used mixed methods in-depth interviews with a quantitative survey.<sup>1</sup> Gibbs (2015) citing Maguire’s research, yet to be published, on 50 professional doctorates in one institution found frequently the methodology used did not capture the richness of problems. Candidates used qualitative approaches and lack of critical realism. They were not using transdisciplinary approaches and

were playing safe with qualitative research. This links directly with Silverman's complaints about researchers using interviews and my own experience of wanting to adapt my approach so that it would be researching my work activities not just concentrating on older people's interviews.

I created a template so that interview data coded using NVivo 10, desktop research, live evidence from my reflective-practitioner research and reflection notes could finally be brought together as findings so that themes and sub-themes could emerge with discussion and recommendations and looking forward to the future could be written.

## TEMPLATE

Topic ..... incorporating analysed data: emerging themes  
from NVivo 10 and own evolving practitioner research.

<p><b>1. Case Study and Main Question</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Exploratory Case study: Active Older People Participating in Creative Dance – Challenging Perceptions</b></p> <p>Why do active older people choose to participate in creative dance and are there implications and benefits?</p>
<p><b>2. Overall themes: See question grid (combinations or one only)</b> Active older people, Dance, Community/National, Challenging Perceptions (image)</p> <p>Enter theme .....</p>
<p><b>3. Enter Sub-question from question grid</b></p> <p>Enter Sub questions from interview grid</p>
<p><b>4. Theme from interviews or gathered over time from other data and research (inductive or deductive)</b></p>
<p><b>5a. Prompts to self-question where data/evidence has come from.</b> Interviews, NVivo nodes/codes: Yes/No Live evidence: What type? Why included? Other details? Yes/No Observations: What? When? Who? Why included? Reasons/So what? Yes/No Narrative: Experience? Why? What? Reasons/So what? Yes/No Auto-ethnography: Feelings? Ideas? Experience? Reasons/So what? Yes/No Relevant desk research if appropriate Cited Yes/No, Reflection notes Which? Why? Reasons/So what? Yes/No, Reflective Journal When? Why? What? Reasons/So what? Possibly/Yes/No</p> <p><b>5b. Brief comments or explanation: incorporating answers to relevant questions as above</b></p>

The template above brought structure to the analysis task making analysis and interpretation processes manageable.

I completed separate templates for six main themes

- Active older people
- Dance
- Community-national, international (participating)
- Challenging perceptions
- Work based experience
- Connectedness, spirituality, creativity

The following are completed templates for each of the main themes. Each one refers back to relevant questions in Figure 6; the interview aide-memoire grid questions (See Appendix 3) and the aims and objectives.

## Active older people,

### 1. Case Study and Main Question

See Template

### 2. Overall themes: Individual

### 3. Sub-questions from question grid

What are a.o.ps' lives like at this phase of life and what is important to them?

What are the benefits of participating in creative dance?

How can participating in creative dance influence other aspects of life?

How do active older people feel when dancing? What does it mean to them?

What other dance activities are people involved in now and previously (if at all?)

### Sub-questions from interview grid

### 4. Themes from interviews or gathered over time from other data and research (inductive/ deductive)

Ageing, ageism, developmental stages (from individuals point of view)	recovery from depression, release of tension, becoming a self-help group,	Volunteering and contributing, Meaning and feeling of dance, Reasons for dancing, Effect on life,
Benefits of dance for health, physical, social, emotional, spiritual, friendships,	Supporting one another,  Spiritual experience, using imagination and new ideas,	Returning to dance or something dreamt about,
Benefits from their perspectives; choices, time for "me", self-esteem,	Connecting with inner child,	Life Long Learning, Building friendships, Being in a community of dancers,
Confidence building, Staying independent, Fitting in with other commitments,	Globalisation and family, Moving to be near family, Different family circumstances,	Fun, Going out together,
Health and wellbeing, Staying active, Physical activity benefits,	Time constraints,  Intergenerational activities, grandparents, present and alternative activities	Dance is transforming, Being at ease with oneself, Giving structure to week, Freedom,
Increased awareness, Importance in my life,		What dance do I want to do?

Letting yourself go,	Professional and working	Creative life
Retirement disappearing?	in different ways,	Looking forward for self
Flexible working,	Transition from fulltime	and the world – the future
Changing work patterns,	work, Fitting in other needs	
	and responsibilities	

**5b. Brief explanation:**

Most evidence for “Individual” comes from the in-depth interviews and practitioner interviews backed up by cited desktop research and my own experiences from other research methods listed.

# Dance

## 1. Case Study and Main Question

See Template

## 2. Overall themes:

**Dance, Community**

## 3. Sub-questions from question grid

What is dance? What are the implications as it bridges health, sports, leisure, arts and recreation?

Do a.o.p want to watch dance? Do a.o.p want to perform? Do amateur and professional performances require audiences if so how can they be encouraged?

What is the recent history of dance? How has modernism, contemporary and post-modernism influenced? What is the future and is there a place for a.o.p. dance?

What is community dance and its relationship, similarities and differences to and from other dance activities?

**Questions for aop in-depth interview grid**

**Questions with dance practitioners.**

## 4. Themes

### **Benefits of dance for individuals and how it fits in their lives**

Reasons for dancing and involvement in dance activities,

Dance and competing activities, Interest in dance, Looking forward to it, Meeting peers with same interest,

Friendship forming, Growing community of dancers, Women/Men and dance,

Participation in community, Intergenerational aspects, Performance,

Dance giving new opportunities and interest, Dancing with others, Physical, social and emotion aspects when dancing, Empathy,

Freedom, Limitations in dance sessions,

### **Dance history and now**

Different dance opportunities, dance styles and technique, sessions and performance

Role of dance in past and now, Dance as culture, Expression, Creative dance,

Laban principles and position in dance training and education,

### **Older people embodiment and the right to dance for all**

Dance and the body, Embodiment, Right of dance for all, Rethinking aesthetic

A new choreography for aop, identifying what active older people can bring to their experience that is interesting for performance.

### **Choreography and facilitation that works. More facilitators required.**

'Modern educational dance' aka Laban for a.o.p.

Framework tasks where a.o.p can create and move within them,

Different dance opportunities, Dance styles and technique, sessions and performance  
Future facilitators training and recent dance training courses, Different awarding bodies,  
A.o.p dance companies, events, conferences, projects, festivals,  
Incorporating trust, respect, risk, humour,  
Choreography that works not “frozen in the headlights”

### **Issues around dance placement in several sectors**

Dance placed in several sectors and implications of this- social, leisure, health, wellbeing, performance, commercial v. community – Falling between and then confusion with funding, training and status compared to other arts. Funding for arts activities – voluntary sector, public health, arts council etc.  
Distinctions and prejudices within dance world of professional and amateur, young and older, art, professionalism, Health and friendship. Lack of culture and the arts social policy, Missing target in Public Health. Need choice. Access, Promotion,

### **Win-wins some examples with professional companies and organisations**

Tavaziva, Rambert, Sadlers Wells Elixir festival, now more promotion of dance for active older people. “Gentle exercise and movement”.

### **Some international dimensions**

US student video and Vivacity, RG, ICCC compendium, Jacob’s Pillow (US conference),

### **5b. Brief explanation:**

As project progressed, dance has grown as an important topic. It is far ranging, and various forms of data and evidence is used. This is based on inputs from the in-depth interviews, the practitioner conversations, my personal dance activities and observations, gathering live evidence and reading widely.



## Community, Local, National, international,

### 1. Case Study and Main Question

See Template

### 2. Overall themes:

Community National, individual/community, community/dance, Community/Image

### 3. Sub-questions from question grid

What are a.o.ps' lives like at this phase of life and what is important to them?

What are the benefits of participating in creative dance?

How can participating in creative dance influence other aspects of life?

How do active older people feel when dancing? What does it mean to them?

What other dance activities are people involved in now and previously (if at all?)

### Sub questions from interview grid

### 4. Themes

#### National and community issues –

Social cohesion,

Funding and policies,

Transport, access to what's going on - promotion, environment, regeneration and facilities,

New opportunities, Retirement and working, demographics, phase of life,

Lack of culture and the arts in social policy, Age Friendly Cities, Access to quality activities, Public health, NHS costs, Isolation and loneliness, Health and Arts,

Encouraging and supporting grassroots organisations,

Need for large scale quantitative research to demonstrate benefits,

Intergenerational activities,

**Communities of interest**, roll out of dance activities, Positive aspects of dance for neighbourhoods, Communities of dancers, Choices,

**Funding and policies**: voluntary sector, sponsorship/philanthropy, crowdfunding, resourcing locally and nationally volunteering, retirement disappearing, health and arts,

**Connectedness** Benefits for communities, getting people more active, older people remaining independent and part of the community

**International** ICCC compendium, linking up with other organisations, introducing creative dance, Elixir and People Dancing Festivals. Student projects, Other older people companies and making links.

### 5b. Brief explanation:

Themes above grouped under the bold headings but recognise that some overlap. It is clear pulling together works well. Different themes came from the interview nodes but that is not surprising because the interviews were not designed to question more generic themes beyond individual experiences and their lives.

## Challenging perceptions,

**1. Case Study and Main Question**  
See Template.

**2. Overall themes:**

Challenging Perceptions (image)

**Community/challenging perceptions**

A.o.p./perceptions

Dance/perceptions (performance, self, benefits)

Community/perceptions

**3. Sub-questions from question grid**

Is there a need for an aesthetic for older people's dance?

How can positive images of active older people help to increase participation in activities and citizenship?

Will increased older people's activities enable and improve the image of this age group?

How can this be created and promoted?

**Sub questions from interview grid**

**4. Themes**

Language and lack of terminology,

Grandparents, intergenerational activities,

Embodiment  
Intergenerational activities

Life course,

Freedom, "Me" time,

Staying independent,  
New confidence and interests,

Ageism, Stereotypes,  
Not a chronological thing!  
Attitudes,

Role of 'Centres' in community,

Govt. policies,  
demographic change,  
Different choreography  
Involvement of older people themselves and incorporating their ideas

Resources,

Optimism, hope and fears,

Best things being the age you are,

Working with young filmmakers.

Dance activities changing  
how older people are seen,

How life is now and what is important,

Funding and dance for older people,

No longer invisible,

Wellbeing and being active

Volunteering,

Style, "Advanced Style,"

How older people are "supposed" to be,

Creativity, Connectedness,

Changing images in the media,

Wisdom experience and knowledge,

Lack of culture and the arts in much social policy,

Experience doing a DProf

as an older person,

Wishes for self and others,

wishes for the world,

Retirement is changing

Bin Ageism,

Influence of IT,

Spending power

Television and the media,

Relationship with young

people,

## Work-based and personal experience

<b>1. Case Study and Main Question</b> See Template		
<b>2. Overall themes:</b> Work based and personal experience		
<b>3. Sub-questions from question grid</b> What are a.o.ps' lives like at this phase of life and what is important to them? What are the benefits of participating in creative dance? How can participating in creative dance influence other aspects of life? How do active older people feel when dancing? What does it mean to them? What other dance activities are people involved in now and previously (if at all?)		
<b>4. Topic grid entries</b>		
Leadership and Management, Best practice,  Boundary spanning, Vivacity,  Role models,  Older dancer,	Creating organisations, Inductive and deductive approaches, Community agents, Presenter, advisor,  Researcher,  Performing,	Welcoming approach, Grassroots approach,  Funding applications Involvement and influencing, Championing older people, Intergenerational activities.
<b>5b. Brief explanation: incorporating answers to relevant questions as above</b> I included the topics that emerged from the topic analysis as well as my work experience and possible ideas. Uncertain how to incorporate into the findings rather than recommendations, the way forward and reflections chapters		

## Connectedness

### 1. Case Study and Main Question

See Template

### 2. Overall themes:

**Bridging theme: connectedness, spirituality, creativity, happiness and wellbeing**

### 3. Sub-questions from question grid

All questions touch on these themes from a personal, community, national, international political and is transdisciplinary. It is rising up political agendas as well as business, religious, social and individuals own meaning and purpose in life and the future of the planet

### Sub questions from interview grid

### 4. Themes

Benefits of developing spirituality, happiness and wellbeing, resilience,	Connectedness between people and benefits for communities, social cohesion,	More creative life, Some philosophical issues, Individuals ideas, Empathy,
purpose and meaning,	neighbourliness (isolation and loneliness)	Carer role, Connectedness through IT,
individualism and individuality,	hope for the future,	Dancing together and
intergenerational activities, networking in community, make things happen in the community,	communal living, importance of relationships,	Sharing with audience and neighbours,
"inner child",	benefits of socialising after sessions,	moving to be near family,
passing on history,	Respect, Trust,	enjoyment, humour (fun), between peers and with facilitator.

Having captured the aspects of my case study into the six analytical grids. I honed down the topics further, still keeping in mind the case study and research project title. The next step was to create a matrix (Figure 10). I knew it was impossible to include all the themes listed in the templates and research them thoroughly. All were relevant, interesting or important, but I had to keep boundaries, taking into account the university word-count requirements and what was most useful to meet my aims and objectives and inform decision/policy makers and influence those interested in ageing and active older people's dance. Everything could not be included, for example, I decided research data from my international work activities would not be included. There were ethical reasons for not including friendships and relationships within my research although I recognised these as important issues for older people participating in dance activities and for training facilitators who wish to work with older people. Further research could be carried out by others in the future. It is an important topic in its own right.

The six completed templates brought together all the NVivo 10 themes and evidence from the older dancers' interviews, leading practitioners' informal conversations, work activities and desktop research. Figure 10 is a two-dimensional matrix that enabled my analysis and interpretation to proceed further using a transdisciplinary/multidisciplinary approach. I had many ideas from my past, coming from within me intermingling with new evidence and data I captured through my research activities. The matrix made the themes manageable. Bazeley (2013) suggests a researcher becomes a theory builder, identifying and making sense of all the patterns and relationships from their data and experience. The completed templates demonstrated how themes linked back to my research questions, and tools I had devised. Figure 10 enabled the highest priority topics to be identified for inclusion in my research report.

	Active older people	Participating in (groups and community – local, national,)	Changing perceptions (image)		Creative/contemporary Dance issues
<b>Individuals</b>	<p>Phase of life and developmental stages</p> <p>Dance – new experience or returning, transforming</p> <p>Challenges</p> <p>Freedom, joy, range of feelings, spirituality, Creativity, Learning, memory, “me time”,</p> <p>Transition from work</p> <p>Responsibilities, Health and Wellbeing,</p> <p>Structure to week</p> <p>Meaning and purpose in life</p>	<p>Social, friendships, relationships neighbourliness.</p> <p>Active ageing - volunteering participation</p> <p>Social cohesion</p> <p>Connectedness, empathy,</p> <p>New opportunities</p>	<p>Active, participation</p> <p>Phase of life and time flexibility</p> <p>Responsibilities</p> <p>Lack of terminology, concepts, ageing,</p>		<p>Benefits –holistic, frameworks, collaborating, Examples of Choreography that works,</p> <p>Relevant dance history – context only,</p> <p>Fragmentation within the dance world.</p> <p>Dance in several sectors</p> <p>Choreography – embodiment and life experience v. physicality and speed,</p> <p>Win-wins with professional companies.</p> <p>Choices, Influence of funding</p> <p>Lack of culture and arts in social policy</p>

	Active older people	Participating in (groups and community – local, national,)	Changing perceptions (image)		Creative/contemporary Dance issues
<b>Groups</b>		Post-modernism Volunteering contributing Communities of interest Public Health and Arts Intergenerational activities Cultural activities Social, political context Practitioners and decision makers working together	Performance New aesthetic and a.o.p creative dance as Artform Arts for All, Media, IT, New images, break down stereotypes, Changing images, ageism,		Types of classes and performance Age specific or intergenerational Audience Music and props used Facilitators required International working
<b>Work- based (own experience)</b>	Triangulation with other data Reflections on activities Own reasons for dancing and involvement	Example grassroots Vivacity. Boundary Spanning, influencing, researcher, Attendance at seminars, committees and conferences, Advisory work Leadership, welcoming approach, community agent	Public speaking and Advisory TEDxTottenham Being a role model inspiration, mentoring Performance		

**Figure 10** Matrix showing transdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary nature of topics and activities.  
(Note – Last column concerning dance issues is separate from the rest of two-dimensional grid.)



Metaphorically, my research was like a giant jig-saw puzzle where many scattered pieces were coming together forming a final picture that was still unknown.

Part 1 has shown how the three aspects of my case study were initially coded, analysed and pulled together as a case-study using NVivo10, transdisciplinary/multi-disciplinary approaches using the six main themes templates. Themes and sub-themes could emerge through findings where further interpretation and synthesis takes place.

## **Part 2 Findings**

In Part 2 there are fifteen findings that emerged from the analysis, interpretation, synthesis and transdisciplinarity critically reflected upon in Part 1.

At the beginning of each finding there are

- **Overall Themes**
- **Relevant nodes from interviewees' node tree.**

At the end of each finding

- **The links with recommendations are noted.**

## **F1 Older people, terminology and cohorts**

### **Overall Themes:**

- Individuals/Active older people
- Image/Challenging Perceptions

### **Relevant nodes from interviewees' node tree:**

- Image and what is the active older person including ageism, attitudes towards older people; language and what is an older/elderly person; stereotypes;

I included this as the first theme because it sets the scene for the present and evolving social and cultural worlds that older adults have to face once they reach the second stage of life. This theme has also evolved during my dancing journey and research activities; the reality in 2010 had changed significantly by 2016.

The interviewees were aware of ageism and stereotypes; they had their own views about what is an elderly person and ways they themselves and others perceive them. It also emerged that some interviewees recognised that young people themselves often have a difficult time. Some of these themes are included within this analysis whilst others are explored in the challenging perceptions finding in F15.

The following are examples of interviewees' thoughts and feeling about ageing and being older

### **Ken**

K: Probably experience and accumulated knowledge can play a part...I can see, you know, it could quite easily close in. I am aware of that possibility and I think you do have to actually grow and keeping an outward growing and to engage being in the world....

Ken was aware that it was easy to close in if a person does not remain active. The importance of having things to do enabled individuals to keep growing and be outward looking, He gives examples of how he and his wife try to keep doing things and the influence his grandchild has had on them.

K. For us, I think that has something to do with things to go to. Strangely, our little grandson has... opened our eyes to, to the world and just watching him grow up, it is an opportunity to watch this little lad growing up, it's just miraculous...we really enjoy it.

When I asked if he considered himself to be old his answer was illuminating, indicating that one's inner world and how one sees oneself in the mirror can be different.

K: When I look inside here I feel like I'm 30.... but occasionally when I look at myself in the mirror I say Oh! that's me...so, uh yeh, it fluctuates. Yeh I don't feel, I don't know, I don't feel what you're supposed to feel like at 67...Yeh

When I probed who he thought an old person was, his response was to the point:

K: probably when they're dead.

I interpret this to mean that providing a person is active and growing in some way then they are an adult who is living, whilst an old person is no longer "alive" and actively engaged in activities.

An alternative view, or another perspective, is not wanting to be thought of as old. Penny thought that people older than her were old. She was sensitive about retiring. She liked it when she is considered younger. This echoes Segal's internalised thoughts (See F15d). Penny's role models included women who worked into old age, and this shows that, for her, working is an important part of being valued as we age.

### **Penny**

P: well older than me of course, because I think old is older than me...I mean, I'm not far off 67 and obviously, I am really pleased when people don't realise that I am as old as I am

I wanted to explore this further with Penny because she obviously had assumptions that being older was negative and linked to not being youthful.

P: (Sighs) because it implies that I am more.... An interesting question...It implies that I am more...active and I am more part of life

There is something about being older, being in some...yeh...I am a little bit sensitive the...about to overcome about the retirement bit because the reality of this moment is I am retired and I don't like that label it's something I never wanted.

Her response is an honest response to the present situation she finds herself in, showing the strong influence labelling and language used can have on an individual's life. She expresses the importance of her role models and the importance she places on work and identity.

P: I have a dear friend who is 84, a psychotherapist still works a little not a lot, but you know my role models are people who have gone on working in whatever way, and another one is 76

When I then probed more deeply to find out if she thought that things were beginning to change she recognised that she was "older" and that our generation will make change happen.

P: I think it is, and I think...our generation will change that...Yes, well always older than me! I would say, I would say old now is of course probably from about ten years older than I am at the moment.

I found it interesting that Penny's views differed from my own thoughts and experiences about aging. My attitude is that ageing is natural positive process that can be embraced whilst she wanted to be perceived as young, saw ageing negatively and wanted to continue working for as long as she could.

In contrast, V1 was pleased that she had the opportunity to leave work. She no longer had to face a stressful job each day.

**V1**

Like for a lot of people, it was, very stressful job and I don't think I acknowledged the impact it was having on my mental health, at the time and it is an absolute relief that I don't have to be within that environment anymore... I couldn't be myself at work, a lot of the time ... governed by, you know, hierarchy and the rules and God knows what, and the rules and changes they were enforcing upon you. I'm so glad, it's like a relief not to go to work anymore.

J1 thought it is difficult to generalise about age. She described recollections of her grandmothers, how they were individuals, but by sixty they were not expected to do things.

**J1**

J1: Oh yes. I think it has improved over the years...in that we are being more active but you can't generalise about the actual physical age, can you? Some people are older by fifty-five to sixty and other people are still young at...ninety.

When I asked about language and any ideas she had about terminology for this stage of life she replied:

J1: Oh, gosh no! We don't ever use the term OAP...I would say in a sense that is almost slightly derogatory, we would say Senior Citizens or mature people

She continues by describing what her two Grandmas were like:

J1...Grandmas were always in sort of black clothes and long things and you know, didn't go anywhere or do anything. I mean I had two grandmas...one had dreadful asthma...and so my image of her is just her sitting in the same armchair always when we went there. Whereas the other grandma had lovely white hair in a bun and.... sort of rosy cheeks and...and was an active lady....so that was two images even at that particular time. But the

over-riding image in those days was that you were old at certainly sixty weren't you and you didn't do anything....

This image of people from sixty being inactive, marginalised from society and a single chronological cohort was prevalent when I began my research in 2011 and although over time it has changed, it persists.

Another concern was that ageing and what might happen in the future was unknown. Eliza worries but thinks having an optimistic attitude helps.

### **Eliza**

E: It's worrying that the future might not be so good because you never know what's around the corner. If you keep yourself reasonably fit and mentally strong and socially well-adjusted and hopefully it will help you to cope with things as and when they come along in future

I probed more deeply to find out what she thought. Some of the unknown things were:

E...well there are always family disasters or...obviously... you know, you might fall over and break a leg or...as people do...there's always things that might happen and I just think that if you keep yourself fit and healthy and happy enough that you will be able to cope better with whatever life throws at you in the future,

The interviewees included so far were all in their sixties, but Maria was over 80. She accepts getting older and recognises she cannot do all she wants. She finds doing her dance class and the journey there and back is an achievement.

### **Maria**

J...you are getting the most out of life as you can?

M: Well that's it, when I finished on the Wednesday (dancing) I come home, sit on that sofa, put the television on, go to sleep.

J: Right and just relax

M: Yes, I have done something and I feel good.

J: Yeh

M: It's all about feeling good.

Slowing down is another concern. J1 is another older interviewee and she realises that at 79 she can no longer do several activities each day. She is aware her life could change. She and her husband have made plans for the future and do not want to impose on their family. She and she and her husband have, independent, positive attitudes.

## **J1**

J1: I realise I am slowing down (chuckle) and I can't do everything that I used to do... I can't do three or four different things in one day... which I would have done at one time...and.... I do occasionally get days when I feel old and I then I get another day when I feel fine

When asked what she enjoyed about being an active 79-year-old J1 answered:

J1: Well the fact that I can still be active ... yes, yes...yes, the-the fear is always right at the back of your mind, mean it's not come to the fore but of suddenly being struck down with something ... Parkinson's, Motor Neurone, Alzheimer's, any things like that... that your life is changed, isn't it, it's upside down and would never be the same again...We both said.... well we think the other one would want to and should go into care that...you know, some people say oh no wouldn't dream of it, I must do it at home sort of thing, but.... neither of us feel, feel like that.

She and her husband are planning ahead:

J: at least discussing it.... yes, yes, and .... We wouldn't ever live with the family, either of the families you know

She appreciates that she and her husband's biggest opportunity having reached this stage in their lives is that they are active and do things together. Health is her primary concern.



## J1

J1: well the fact that I can still be out every day and be active, belong to these things, meet all these people ... rather than ... being poorly or stuck at home not, not meeting anybody. And the fact I still've got my husband and we are still able to do things together. Yes. well, yes I would say health, will be the primary concern. ....

In contrast to Eliza's fear of the unknown, J1 is pleased that she doesn't know what might happen in the future and her main concern would be to lose her sight, as this would limit the activities in which she could participate.

J1: Yes, well I mean it's a good job we don't know, isn't it? ... I think eyes are a main concern is that if I couldn't drive, if I couldn't read, if I couldn't watch the television...I don't know what that would do to me. I think that would be my biggest sort of fear ... not being able to do things any more.

By focussing on interviewees' data, many themes emerged. Some thought remaining active, engaged and doing activities were important. Internal feelings and outward signs, such as looking at oneself in the mirror, influenced attitude about one's ageing. Some did not want to be considered old and wanted to be seen as younger and active whilst others thought that ageing happens and providing one remains active and healthy ageing nowadays can be enjoyable. Finally, all people whatever their chronological age are individuals and there is no terminology yet to cover different cohorts. A single chronological cohort for all over 50 is no longer acceptable.

As my research, progressed issues about the ageing population, changes in demography and increased longevity became more important. As shown below, there is concern about older people needing to participate in their neighbourhoods. There is increased awareness that older people contribute and need to be involved in decision-making if they are to remain independent, healthy and age positively.

Simultaneously, as the data from the interviewees shows, many older people do not consider they are "old", "retired" needy and vulnerable. Until recently, this

stage of life has been perceived negatively. The European Year for "Active Ageing and Solidarity Between Generations" (2012) sought to create sustainable active ageing cultures and embrace intergenerational solidarity to encourage decision-makers to help people age 'actively', growing old in good health, living independently when possible and having a role in society.

It is difficult to categorise older people. Schuller and Watson (2009) suggest "retirement", as respite between work and death, is obsolete because most people will live for at least 20-40 years after leaving paid work. They suggest a "third stage of life" between, 50–75 years is a transition from paid employment to "retirement". They warn the labour market and statistical support ratios are still grouping and perceiving a largely healthy cohort of people as "dependent" although many of these people contribute to society, so agreeing with Cohen (2000,2005). They suggest more learning opportunities are needed so older people remain in work and make the transition towards the eventual fourth stage. Their theories were based on an independent Inquiry into the future for Lifelong Learning sponsored by NIACE<sup>17</sup>. Laslett (1989) suggested a "Third age" where there is relative independence, activity and good health seen mostly between 60 to about 75-80 years which is followed by a "fourth age" where there is increasing intellectual and physical decline and dependency. His theories were instrumental in supporting the development of life-long learning and such organisations as the U3A in the UK. Although "active older people" in my research is similar to "third age", I thought this term has become so linked to learning and education courses that it was not the right terminology for my project because my research is wider, about "being" and making choices in everyday life, not solely focussed on learning courses

Others devised concepts such as "young-old" "middle-old" and "old-old" (Foreman 1992). Freeman 2011 criticises these terms because people in their 50-60s are labelled "old" when increasingly they do not consider themselves so and most probably think their parents might be approaching "old age". Although "active older people" is not an ideal term because it is wordy, it gave clarity to my research. None of the interviewees had an innovative term for the cohort they were in. Some

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<sup>17</sup> National Institute of Adult Continuing Education

thought “seniors” acceptable but I would argue this is a hierarchical term often associated with schools or is American English for “retired”.

Cohen’s paradigm had four developmental stages in the second half of life. He suggests:

*“It is time for a.... more motivating paradigm. - not a rosy, everything is wonderful perspective, but a clear-eyed view that acknowledges the hard realities of growing old while.... celebrating the benefits, pleasures and rewards”.* (Cohen 2005: xiv).

Schuller, Laslett and Cohen agree previous theories and practice need to change because older people have potential to develop and contribute. Many older people have realistic attitudes to their ageing, viewing “retirement” as outmoded because they pursue interests they previously did not have time for and many are engaged in paid or voluntary work.

Schuller regards the third stage as a transition from full-time work to eventual retirement whereas Cohen’s paradigm recognises each of his four developmental stages provide opportunities for engagement, more satisfying relationships, intellectual growth and fun rather than cultural withdrawal

This stage in life can include much more than just transitioning to old age. It can be a positive time as many interviewees have found. A chance for new experiences, following earlier dreams and challenges, tempered by different lifestyles, variable social, financial and health factors.

From April 2011, the Government stopped employers having a default retirement age of 65 years. The Equalities Act 2010 legislated that employers could no longer make employees leave work on grounds of age or other discriminatory factors. There was legislation concerning access to pensions and savings. This will impact on people’s lifestyles and influence future work patterns and ways older people are perceived.

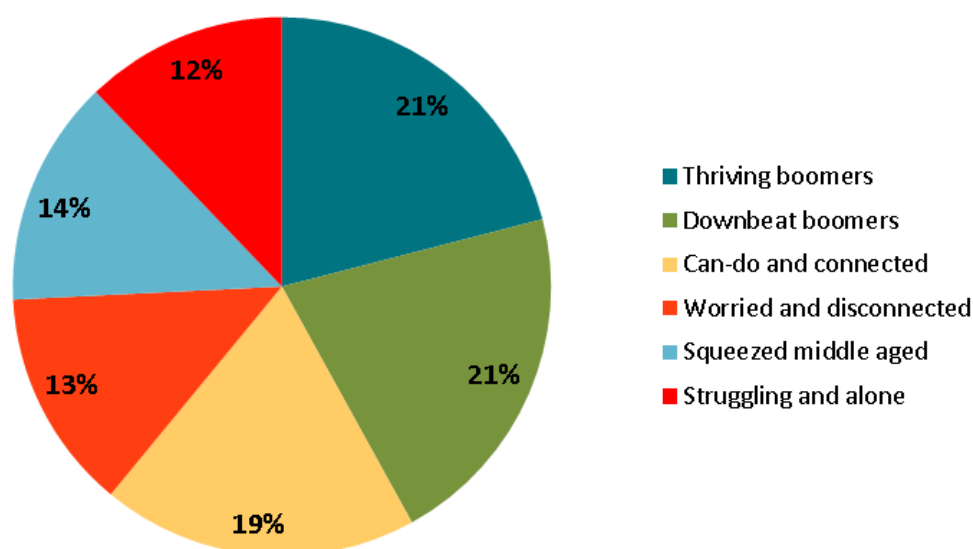
Willetts (2010), when Conservative Minister for Higher Education, asserted “baby boomers” born between 1945-65 were a generation thriving at their children’s expense, absorbing great proportions of the nation’s resources, becoming a drain on the NHS and welfare systems. He argued political, economic and cultural leaders needed to give young people opportunities. If not, they will be taxed more, work longer hours for less money, have lower social mobility and live in degraded environments in order to pay for their parents’ quality of life. However, Age UK Annual Report (2014) showed people aged 65 and over in the UK contributed £61 billion to the economy during the previous year through employment, informal caring and volunteering. An increased number of older people does not mean they are a burden on society because many are remaining fit, working, volunteering and have caring responsibilities.

Sinclair’s report (2015), on behalf of an alliance of major national charities rejects the concept of a privileged generation of “boomers” aged 50-70 years. Just like Cohen’s and Schuller’s theories, it warns policymakers should not make mistakes designing policies based on assumptions rather than realities. If society is going to become “Ready for Ageing” it has to recognise not all older people are the same single retired cohort. Sinclair’s report and the complementary “Getting Ready for Ageing” manifesto (2014) contain statistics and interpretations showing there are inequalities across all ages involving health, income and wealth, education, housing, employment and the ability to contribute. For example, those living in the most deprived locations can expect 52.5 years of good health compared to 70.5 years for those living in the least deprived locations. In recent years, the increasingly polarised public debate pitching generations against each other has not been helpful. It argues ways need to be found for younger and older people, including the less-advantaged, to have better lives. I have shown in my research that active older people are concerned and interested in younger generations and they recognise difficulties many younger people are experiencing. Many support and encourage their children and grandchildren. They want them to have good lives.

The Centre for Ageing Better (CAB) launched in December 2015 to take forward the implications and address concerns of the “Ready for Ageing?” Report. This included negative perceptions of older age, ways old age is experienced and what

it is like to grow old. The Centre sees these issues as one of the biggest challenges for public policy. I attended the CAB launch where “Later Life in 2015” (Ipsos Mori, 2015) research findings were presented. These findings will influence the Centre’s first priorities. Strong links were found between health, financial security and social connections. They found social connections were as important as money and health for a good later life. Older people wanted appreciation and social relationships and the research identified that later life can be enjoyed despite people having some health and financial problems. This triangulates with some of the interviewees data. They identified six groups, aged from 50+, evenly distributed in the UK based on experiences, circumstances and levels of wellbeing. <http://www.ageing-better.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Late-life-in-2015-visual-findings.pdf> .

Each grouping had common factors categorised as:



**Figure 11** New terminology for people in later life. (CAB)

I think this model is helpful but too contrived, as individuals do not all fit into a neat six categories but it is a start. It is still early days for cohorts that are meaningful to be identified in the external world. No doubt further concepts and labels will emerge as more research findings become known and older people themselves and those who are interested in ageing find new meaningful terminology that is acceptable to them and other generations. Terms need to reflect the ways people are “being” in the world and what their life experiences are like. I suggest it is not

just about chronological age because the second half of life includes cultural, historical and social constructs rather than relying just on chronological age.

As identified in the Preface, I had internalised assumptions about the elderly. I also had to reconcile that I was no longer just seen as an adult entering new work opportunities and changing direction in my career, developing new interests and becoming more involved in my local community. I was perceived by some people and organisations as “retired” or living in “later life”. I was surprised when I found out that people aged between 50 - 110+ were often categorised as a single chronological cohort.

I explored this during my conversations with the interviewees and found themes including ageism, stereotypes and language used for older people, young people, the influence and role of television, media and IT and ways in which participating in dancing might help change image and ageism in the future.

At this time in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it became clear during my research that there is not yet sufficient language to describe accurately who my research is about.

Language about the second half of life is in a state of flux. Language has not caught up with realities happening in the outside world or in ways active older people are thinking and feeling about themselves.

Retirement, as previously experienced is disappearing and there are new expectations emerging from active older people themselves and from decision/policymakers. As Cohen (2000,2005) suggests, present decisions are being created based on research statistics that no longer reflect the capabilities and aspirations of many people who previously were classified as one cohort called “retired” or “old age pensioners”.

**(Recommendations: 1,2,6,9,10)**

## **F2 Benefits of Dancing**

### **Overall Themes:**

- Individuals/Active older people
- Dance
- Connectedness

### **Relevant nodes from interviewees' node tree:**

- Benefits
  - Effects on life
  - Awareness
  - Better physical health
  - Dance is transformational
  - Social, emotional, spiritual benefits
  - Structure and highlight of week

The first part of main research question asked “why do active older people choose to participate in creative dance and are there benefits?). One of the reasons I left my fulltime career had been to return to dancing because I knew I wanted to dance again. For me, it was a life enhancing activity that I enjoyed and I wanted it to be part of my life again whilst I still had my energy and good health. I knew all aspects of my life benefitted including physical, emotional, social, creative and spiritual, from dancing. I therefore wanted to explore why other active older people were also choosing to dance at this stage of their lives.

Each interviewee gave their reasons for dancing and ways it benefited them as individuals. All were regular participants in creative dance sessions, attending whenever they could. Although coming from different backgrounds and having different lifestyles, all considered dance sessions added quality to their lives.

As was shown in the final node tree the analysis and Figure 12, below, the benefits were numerous and wide-ranging including the

### **The effects of dancing regularly and enabling new, social relationships**

Eliza previously had lots of caring responsibilities for family and relatives and worked fulltime. She had found it difficult to find a dance class. Now dancing again, she was benefitting from her sessions and friendships she made.

## **Eliza**

E: Right across the board; apart from obviously physical benefits...strengthening muscles making sure your joints are well supported etc....the...emotional and social aspects I think are...important too...To have...a...network of people you are in touch with, have a similar...interest to yourself is really important and it is something I haven't had before because of being too tied up with all the things I had to do in my earlier life. It is not something I was never able to...develop in my past life, as it were, and so it's really nice for me to have this now.... it's expanded my acquaintances...my friendship circle with so many new people but I hadn't really expected to have at this stage of my life...

It certainly improved my mental status...ye know...my emotional status...as I say, I think I was pretty much...I was in a black pit, and probably an undiagnosed depression (awkward laughter) ...and physically not very good either for various reasons...it has improved every aspect to it...the physical, the mental, the social, the emotional, everything across the board.

J1, just like Eliza, thought that not only did dancing regularly benefit her physically but the social aspects benefitted her

## **J1**

J: And what do you think the benefits of coming to the class are?

J1: Health, good health, bodily.... the company, meeting the other people...I always stay afterwards for the drinks not everybody stays by any means...particularly since unfortunately, the price had to go up if you include a drink...but...I always stay and I feel that, that aspect of it is as important, almost as important as the thing, so I've made lots of new friends by coming to these things. Yes, Yes, so...It's good (chuckles).

Toni also thought the social benefits were important but was pleased that she had found a relaxing environment where she could meet and make new friends.



## **Toni**

T: instead of going to XXX<sup>18</sup> and sweating and paying a lot of money to ponce about .... it's nice, it just relaxed and you haven't got to worry about how you look in a leotard.... You just come down in whatever clothes that are comfortable for you... and enjoy yourself for an hour and a half.... just relax.

J: And then, what do you think the benefits would be?

T: Health-wise its brilliant...it gets your heart rate going, socialise...The benefits are just chilling out and meeting a few people like-minded and your age group like...everyone is so friendly...no one is, puts on airs and grace, everyone is friendly.

Similarly, Penny had enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere of her dance sessions and also appreciated the friendships she had made and new opportunities for socialising.

## **Penny**

P: ... socially it's absolutely wonderful...she makes such a nice atmosphere, informal with us all, and many, I'm part of the group, who stay for coffee afterwards, we always do that. And I have made really a lot of nice friends and...you know you can chat about anything

Toni and Penny came from very different backgrounds, one a working-class West Indian woman in London who never thought she would dance and a university lecturer who had moved from a small SW town to SW City. Both these women had found new social relationships in their dance sessions where there were welcoming, non-judgemental environments. Attendees at their sessions not only danced together but got to know one another and found they had other things in common with their fellow dancers and so new friendships developed with people very different from themselves could chill out and enjoy being with others and this would not have happened without a common interest in dancing.

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<sup>18</sup> The local large commercial leisure centre and gym

**Increased awareness,**

Ken was more aware of his limitations but also what he can develop and improve and this thinks this enable him to have a longer healthier life.

**Ken**

K: yeh I think it's....the freedom to try things out and obviously, I've not...you know at 67 you don't have the same range of movement perhaps, certainly not the same energy...that I had in the 20s and 30s...so you have to moderate and keep aware of things and every now and again you just sometimes in classes, you wiggle, do warm up exercises and I get the odd twinge, "oh watch it!" and watch that (amused) and so you've got to be aware of the limitations...but within that structure there's a great sense of freedom of movement and I just have the sense that by, by using...your body and doing these things you'll actually improve....You're actually buy a little bit longer...and not just live a little bit longer but actually live healthily and physically fit. ...because I think both my parents lived to quite a good age but they, they you know if they did the movement sort of thing as well I think they would've been a lot fitter and able to cope. And I am hoping that I, you know, I would rather go out with a bang.

One of the benefits V1 found was being more aware of her body when she moved in public.

**V1**

...It certainly makes me more aware of moving in say the high street or something like that, you know, when I'm having to avoid other people and things and I do kinda like to walk in a, in a dancelike way, if you know what I mean. And I like to be aware of the space around me and aware of my impact on other people. I think I'm a lot more aware of that, the people I see around you know, so I don't know whether that comes from, from the dance or what it comes from...self-preservation

### **Better physical health,**

It was not surprising that the physical benefits were mentioned by interviewees. This included better physical health, the opportunities to release tension, stress and relax, improved posture, and encourages better balance, keeps the body moving and reduces aches and pains. Dancing brings body, spirit and mind closer, and helps to improve memory.

Penny noticed various physical benefits that benefitted her so that she was less tense and has more energy.

#### **Penny**

P: Terribly over worked word “holistic” which makes me cringe... but .... physically I feel much better for doing it and I really notice the difference when I do it twice a week. Neck and shoulders is where like a lot of people, I hold tension and I find neck and shoulders are so much better when I’ve done it. And I have a surge of energy when we have the more energetic or quite aerobic...So I move more freely and it encourages me to perhaps do some exercises at home that I wouldn’t maybe do otherwise

The hospital told P1 to exercise to get his heart beating faster. He enjoyed dancing and thought it benefitted his health.

#### **P1**

J: ...the creative dance you’re doing is helping with your health as well?

P: Yes. If I try to move a bit quicker...because between the dance of slow movement and quick movement. The quick movement, if you move a bit quicker, your heart will, will pump a bit more up.

J: So how do you feel by the end of the session?

P: .... You feel good actually, it’s like, it’s like...yeh, I’ll come again next week

### **Dance had been personally transforming**

Yildas described ways dancing affected her family life and ways she has personally transformed herself. She had been an embarrassed, shy person but

gained confidence, much to her husband's surprise. Dancing has become part of her life.

### **Yildas**

J: OK. Think back to when you were...in Cyprus what kind of dancing did you do when you were young?

Y: When I was young...not much

J: was there dancing?

Y: No, no. When my two daughters get married, engaged and married, you know the Turkish people they have to call the names and come and dance with their husbands... and I said to my husband No! No! I don't want to dance because I don't know...I had my hand on my husband shoulder (laughing) cos I don't know how to dance Jackie...in front of two hundred, three hundred people...I said I do a little bit of dancing in the middle, you know, of the hall. Then the music stop And I say, thank God! But now I want to do more. I'm interested.

I then probed more deeply to ask whether she now felt dance had become part of her life and whether it had changed her changed her.

Y: Yes (enthusiastically). Now. Yes. It comes to my life now.

J: OK

Y: How nice...how good it is

J: and now that's making you see your life in a different way?

Y: Yes. Like I changing. I'm changing!

J: ...You're changing?

Y: Yes. Like, I'm something. I'm changing (raising voice). I'm changing.

J: Right

Y: Even in front of the mirror. My husband says, "what wrong with you Yildas?"

And in the wedding like. I went to a wedding

J: Yes

Y: I said to my husband, come on, let's go and dance. He said Y.... you shy before. You didn't move your legs...

Y: you know I want more.

## **To be creative and expressing themselves emotionally and spiritually.**

Participating in dance sessions was a new experience for Bryony and she was finding it emotionally and spiritually beneficial as well as a way to keep her body and mind more active.

### **Bryony**

It's given me something to work at and improve. It's given me an avenue in my 60s that I hope will keep my body and mind more active than if I hadn't done it or if I hadn't done something equivalent.

J: Have you had any evidence of that?

B: Only in the way I feel

When I then asked how she felt when she was dancing she expressed a number of different emotional benefits including being mindful of the moment, detached from problems of everyday life, connected to others and good in herself. She also had become aware that she still had some way to go before she could experience the joy that some other dancers seemed to experience but recognised this would take time.

### **Bryony**

B: How I feel when I'm dancing is, I feel totally in the moment. I feel totally detached from the cares and considerations of everyday life. I feel part of a group which I have an affinity with. I feel good in my body. I feel good in my mind. I feel pleased to know that I can (Pause) take on board instruction, retain it, process it, perform it and then keep it, retain it...I feel I have to let myself go a bit further before it completely liberates my spirit. I sometimes feel when I dance that other people are more joyous about it and I would like to be like that but I think I am still in very early days of learning dance...and learning what it means...Yes, I find that a challenge but I have always been the sort of person who likes the challenge.

Toni not only felt free when dancing but also wanted it to last longer. Unlike exercise and sports regimes which are often abandoned as soon as possible, she willingly attended regularly and wanted more.

## **Toni**

J: Can you say how you feel when you are dancing...

T: FREE. I just feel...because I'm always stressed out...I don't know what it is that stress me out...but I'm always stressed out...Yeh...but it is nice...to go to dancing and just relax

J: Right so it makes you feel kinda relaxed?

T: Yes

J: It's given you freedom

T: It's a pity it is only an hour and half

Belle was finding ways to bring mind, emotions and body together. This was improving her mental and emotional health.

## **Belle**

B: I think that is one of the gifts of getting older is that you cannot keep up this illusion of like being ideal. (Laughs)

J: So, what benefits do you think dance is giving you at the moment?

B: Well I feel it's very good for my body to be dancing, its...I feel it's very good for my spirit when I have these experiences of music evoking...very, the spirit within me and then experiencing the natural expression of it in movement. So...it's a definite benefit and because it's new to me too...and it's...wonderful to experience something completely new at 72.

For Eliza, it helped overcome depression and gave herself quality time. Dancing enabled them to see their lives differently, recognising they could positively make the transition from one life stage to another.

Other emotions expressed by interviewees included having fun and a good time, having opportunities to touch others in a safe environment, and increasing one's independence and sense of wellbeing.

### **Structure to week**

For some, attending a regular dance session it was a highlight of their week and gave it structure and it was something to look forward to and enjoy.

For Maria, the creative dance sessions are a special part of her life getting her out her house

### **Maria**

J: So do you think then coming to this creative dance class now has affected your life if at all?

M: ooh a lot.

J: In what kind of ways?

M: A lot, because I wouldn't have been going out would I? I would have been here probably would have gone up to...the same shops blah, blah and that's it. Now, once a week I have something to look forward to and I really do, yes.

Bryony also benefitted from having a regular activity each week

### **Bryony**

J; So how do you think taking part and joining in...with creative dance has affected your life?

B: Made me more positive. It's given me the focus to come to London twice a week to attend the class. It's given me a new circle of friends some who may become long term permanent good friends; some of whom are interesting acquaintances.

Figure 12 is a Venn diagram that brings my analysis and interpretation together to give the benefits and reasons for dancing together.



**Figure 12** Benefits and reasons for participating in creative dance taken from the interviewees' data.

Analysing and interpreting the interviewees' conversations enabled the benefits and reasons for dancing to be identified and explored because all the interviewees easily communicated their ideas and feelings.

It is important to note that interviewees were participating in dance sessions where expression and interpreting music were encouraged and developed. For all, dance meant more to them than just physical tasks, technique or dancing in



unison led by a facilitator (such is line-dancing). Different types of music were used. Well-trained, committed facilitators led sessions.

My analysis and interpretation complement and triangulate with other recent research. Watts (2013, 2014) summarising the outcomes of the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) initiated project “Dance for Lifelong Wellbeing”, a six-month research project involving qualitative research which combined the impact of dance classes on wellbeing, with community outreach across London. Dance teachers involved were mentored.

The key findings from focus groups with representatives from each community included:

- participants liked regular sessions because progression could be made over time,
- a sense of community, socialising and group learning.
- fun, joking, good humour, playfulness and creativity which were not childishness but ebullience.
- the importance of the RAD brand and the professionalism of the teachers.

The conclusion was that teachers needed to be student-centred, aware of ranges of physical and cognitive capabilities and let go of preconceived ideas about the elderly. Older dancers were like other adults. Each person has different capabilities and requirements. They could experience joy and fun and appreciated good quality sessions.

Houston and McGill’s (2013) research on people with Parkinson’s participating in ballet classes found the sessions were different from ordinary exercise classes because dance leaders were more concerned about promoting dance as a form of communication and artistic expression than just physical activity. Participants expressed themselves in new ways, they thought it was doing them good. Sessions were low-impact, structured with improvised movement with music and there were some gains in stability, coordination, mobility and well-being. Social networks were created that promoted well-being. Similar findings were identified by Mark Morris Dance Company in New York “Dance for PD” programme (see <http://danceforparkinsons.org>) that offers training courses and resources to

promote dance for Parkinson's internationally. Dance benefitted people living with Parkinson's. Their flexibility and confidence increased. Dance connects mind to body, encourages friendship, invoking imagery and graceful movement, awareness of body parts in space, communication and telling stories, creativity, rhythm; in essence dance is joy.

The benefits of participating in creative dance as an active older person are impressive and enhance the lives of those who decide they wish to incorporate dance into their lives and have access to good quality sessions.

**(Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9,10)**

### **F3. Participating in dance sessions and some effects on life**

#### **Overall Themes**

- Active older people
- Dance
- Connectedness

#### **Relevant nodes from interviewees' node tree**

Benefits of dance and physical activities, intergenerational activities, creative dance, dance during adult life, dance sessions, first impressions, music and props, promoting dance, retraining and learning, teacher, reasons and purpose for dancing at this stage of life, dance gives me new opportunities for all sorts of reasons.

The benefits of dancing have been explored in F2 and this finding considers the dance sessions, what is offered and some ways it affects those who participate. All dance sessions, as a minimum, usually include warm-up activities, different dance tasks and a cool-down/relaxation. Some sessions, such as Vivacity, Hazel's sessions and Rambert's Mercury Movers concentrate on offering dance experiences enabling participants to benefit from the session's content and the dance process itself. Participants might dance alone, with different partners or in small or large groups. A welcoming, friendly approach enables new participants to become part of the group and not feel awkward and regular members play an important role in making newcomers feel welcomed.

For Toni, participating in sessions had unexpected positive effects making her more confident.

#### **Toni**

T: cos before...I would never think of joining a group...my daughters...one of my daughters is into Keep Fit and things like that and she has dragged me off to a few Pilates classes...but then I only go when she goes...

Originally, she attended Vivacity with her sister-in-law, but she acquired confidence to attend alone.

T: ...but to join in a dance group...my sister-in-law doesn't go anymore because her work.... she hasn't retired and her work pattern has changed...and I find myself and I am still going alone...and.... I am thinking I can actually do things on my own.

Toni was finding out that how she used to think about her life is changing

**Toni**

T: I've always been independent...but not to do things like going dancing and Pilates and things on my own because I just think it wasn't my life style...that's not like people like me do. We go to Church, we go to work, church, home and that's it...it's opening up to a lot of different things.

She had volunteered to participate in the BIG Dance intergenerational workshops and performance dancing with children. She found she did not feel intimidated although she expected to.

**Toni**

Like the other day when we did the BIG DANCE down X school.... I was telling my husband about it and I was thinking, wow! you know I was with the kids... and I didn't feel intimidated by them or ...Normally I think Oh God I hope they don't ask me a clever question or something like that ...It was lovely ...I enjoyed being with them and it was good.

This older person had spent her life doing factory work, caring for prisoners and being a foster parent but is still insecure being with children in a school environment. This is showing her vulnerability as well as her fears and internalised feelings about her own lack of school learning which she mentioned during our interview. Although it would be wrong to generalise, it is an example where doing an intergenerational dance project session is enjoyable, developing an older person's self-esteem and confidence. It shows that older people as well as youngsters benefit. As noted by Houston, (2005) dance can be a transformational activity that will affect individuals in unpredictable ways.

Bryony and Penny were readjusting to changes in their lives. They were coping with new challenges. Both thought dancing influenced them. Bryony was coping with divorce and returning from living abroad. She needed additional income. During our interview, she realised dancing gave her confidence to go beyond her comfort zone and she reflected on the way it had influenced starting her new business.

### **Bryony**

J: Right...You said that you feel more creative and you're doing something completely new...So can you give any examples of anything in your life that might have been affected by that?

B: Well I am just wondering if my paper craft business has been stimulated by the fact that I have taken on dance as a totally new experience; a totally new learning curve and a totally new opportunity and I hadn't really thought about this. This is very interesting. I hadn't really thought about this before but the fact that I have been able to succeed in a small way in taking dance on board may have given me the encouragement and the confidence to take on this new business because again the paper craft is something I have never done before.

Penny faced new challenges coping with moving to the city and bereavement. She thought dance was empowering her because it made her feel more open to new possibilities. Her life had turned out differently from what she expected and dancing was positively having effects on other areas of her life.

### **Penny**

P: ...getting older as we all know has its own challenges you know, this stage of life.... All stages have their challenges, but it has its particular challenges at this stage of life and I think...moving into a different life for many of us from what we might have imagined our life was going to be. Certainly, in my case, it is not what I would have thought it would be, the way it is, ....so ...It helps, I think it helps one to (pause) to change actually. To grow and to change because there are new neural pathways going on

there...it helps with the change it makes one more open and it is empowering in that way. I think I would see it as empowerment.

Penny saw Hazel's advert at the Arts Centre and remembered the "Imagine" TV programme (see Preface).

### **Penny**

P...I saw it on the board there or in a brochure and of course I had seen the programme on the television all those years ago and thought "I'd love to do that!" ...I did not know what it was or what it was going to be like or anything

She had attended out of interest and when I probed further to see if it had affected her life she thought it had

J: And then does that have an impact on other aspects of your life

P: Yes, of course it is.

J: Can you say a bit about that

P: Yes of course it is because if you have more confidence, if you are feeling more open or willing at ...more together, it...you know your physical and mental, cognitive and emotional stuff .... you're more whole. That holistic thing.

J: Right.

P: Then of course that translates into how you, your way of being in every aspect of your life.

P: Hazel was just so warm and welcoming and the whole group were, and the informality and yet it had structure... she has got that balance really well, I think, and I absolutely loved it and I've been coming ever since.

Yildas had initially been embarrassed and fearful but she found she could express herself and was pleased with her progress.

### **Yildas**

J: I feel a little bit embarrassed first

J: at first

Y: at first

J: yeh

Y: I said Oh my God... when they say right foot I done my left foot

J: Right

Y: I feel a little bit embarrassed but I'm happy.

J: Right, and do you feel that if you think back to when you started 'til now, do you think you, you feel more at ease?

Y: Yes

J: you're not so embarrassed?

Y: Yes

J: or you still embarrassed?

Y: Not like before. Now I feel more relaxed.

J: Right. Good.

Y: I say Yildas . you getting there,

J: Fantastic

Y: Yeh and I had my eyes close (laughs) you know

Older people can attend general adult dance activities if they wish. These offer different styles, techniques and levels of difficulty. Proficient facilitators take account of participants as individuals. However, these sessions have implications for older dancers. The pace and presentation might not match older people's capabilities. Many older dancers have different needs from young lithe dancers because their physicality, learning requirements and memories differ. They bring different experience to the dancing space. I experienced this in 2013 when I attended some adults' sessions offering a particular technique I had previously enjoyed years ago. Most participants were under 30 years. The facilitator was a friendly, experienced excellent teacher. As the weeks progressed, some sequences became too complex for me to learn quickly enough. I did not have sufficient physicality and speed to get off the floor at the pace required. I felt embarrassed. For the first time in my dancing life I sat out (as did a few inexperienced young dancers!). I wondered what others thought having me, an older dancer, who could not keep up with them. I was surprised when they said afterwards that they enjoyed me attending because I was obviously enjoying myself, knew how to dance the particular technique, whilst it was new to them and they were taking it seriously and concentrating hard on what was required. They

commented I gave them hope and encouragement. I felt better, appreciated. I realised how much young and older people share in common. We have our strengths, weaknesses and fears but we can share and learn from each other. However, the experience reinforced my preference for attending sessions aimed at active older dancers where I can develop my dance capabilities at a suitable pace. Active older dancers need choices and variety. Different older dancers will be capable of doing a wide range of dance styles from the most lyrical to vigorous upbeat and rhythmical dance, but we will tackle it differently. Active older people's dance sessions do not only have to be about calmness, dignity and gentle exercise. Active older people vary, not all wanting the same level or type of dance and some have more energy, better memory and physicality than others.

Maria also attended an older people's line-dancing class and in the interview mentioned how she coped with memory issues whilst learning sequences and she was proud when she mastered it.

### **Maria**

M: Well they are easy steps and I should be able to remember but I am afraid when push comes to pull, you start doing "God what comes next"?

J: Right... then and that's really the movement from one to another one isn't it

M: That's it yeh

J: So do you think you eventually get it usually?

M: Oh yes, yes

J: And how do you feel when you

M: Proud of myself.

Thomas and Cooper's (2002, 2003) research included in section 2.8.2 – Community of Practice showed there was a wide range of different kinds of dance activities.



Essex	Southwark and Lewisham
Modern sequence dance clubs	Line dancing
Tea dances	Modern sequence dancing
Line dancing	Afro-Caribbean quadrille
Scottish country dancing	Contemporary Caribbean
Tap dancing	Creative dance

There was one example of a creative dance workshop being run by an enthusiast aged 75 years who found a sympathetic creative dance teacher and a venue. It was attended by a cohesive group of around fourteen mostly white, articulate, women over the age of 60. Age Concern offered line-dancing and tea dances at their events and several dance activities were organised by ethnic groups giving a chance to socialise together.

When asked if Sadlers Wells would roll out a programme as there was demand (see Preface) Ross said that it was decided not to franchise

*because what makes “The Elders” so special, is the individual personalities and interests of its dancers (Ross 2009)*

Each dance group would be different depending on its participants and aims and ethos of each organisation. Factors include the participants abilities and interests, personalities, social backgrounds and the facilitator’s skills and interests.

*The Imagine programme’s positive reception would add to the critical mass of advocacy about this area of work (Ross 2009).*

This was definitely the case. Since the programme, there has been increased interest and growing number of new dance activities across the United Kingdom and demand for dance sessions continues to grow.

**(Recommendations:1,2,3,6,9,10)**

## **F4. Being creative whilst dancing**

### **Overall Themes**

- Dance
- Challenging perceptions
- Connectedness

### **Relevant nodes from interviewees' node tree**

Benefits of dance, Freedom, creativity, dance sessions

This finding addresses creativity whilst dancing. In this report active older people's creative dance involved improvisation and interpretation of music; creating and developing set tasks either alone, with partners or in small or larger groups. It can also be challenging; learning set choreographed sequences created by a facilitator who might use motifs created by participants or use their own choreography.

I considered it important to find out interviewees' thoughts about being creative when dancing. This kind of dance is different from learning one specific technique/style by instruction, dancing in unison, copying the facilitator. Line dancing, folk dancing and exercising to music were offered for older people (with ballroom dancing as social dance) when my research project began and is often available and popular with many older people.

Several interviewees welcomed chances to be creative during dance sessions and enjoyed it the most. Penny felt she could be free and not worry about getting anything wrong.

### **Penny**

J: And some aspect of the classes expressive and creative, it is not direct, so how do you find that?

P: I love that (Pause) I love that best. Really out of all of it...because there is this nice acceptance atmosphere you know you are not going to get wrong in any way and it's a lovely freeing feeling. Yes, yes I like that best, I think probably of the whole thing .... because it is much more alive, there's much more energy to it, it's alive

P1 also found being creative whilst dancing meaningful and enabled him to relate other activities he enjoyed, such as classical music, to his dancing. He enjoyed opportunities to be imaginative and looked forward to interesting sessions. He describes how he appreciated being encouraged not to just wave his arms or walk about. He thought it was important to be led by a dance-artist who choreographs so that dances are visually meaningful as well as enjoyable.

**P1**

P: I really enjoy it.

J: Can you say why?

P: I like the creative side because it makes you think about, about things and there was one time I think it was XX and she says "instead of just waving your hands around, can you just think about what you are doing. And the first thing, because I'm very fond of classical music so I was thinking if I, if I dance and move around, if I think about Beethoven's Pastoral symphony, you know the Pastoral symphony?

J: Yes

P: it's the weather, it's, it's like raining and the wind is blowing in summer, and I thought oh it would be quite good if I try to move like that and then I think (slight chuckle) that's what makes creative dance so, so nice.

When asked how this was affecting his life he mentioned being happier, and he felt he wanted to do more dancing regularly. This enabled him to think about the future and remain motivated.

**P1**

J: So...how do you think it's affecting your life, in the sense that it is something you're doing; and well you've been coming along quite a while now,

P: well, it definitely makes me happier. Well you are happier because you look to the future and you are thinking like tomorrow maybe I can do something tomorrow something like...when you get old you may think oh

what's tomorrow, you're not too bothered; but you need to have the motivation, and you need to go out and do

Hazel, SW dance facilitator, noted that one of her first challenges was to find a balance between giving direct instruction which some wanted and a freer creative task-oriented approach. By balancing these, she was able to establish a successful structure for her sessions enabling her older dancers to experience a range of dance experiences.

It was taking J1 time to understand what Hazel was trying to get them to do. She recognises that she is not a young dancer like Hazel, but she is gradually finding out more about herself and her own developing dance capabilities and is enjoying these new experiences.

## **J1**

J; Thinking of Hazel's class for a minute...do you think it is...making you feel more creative or what?

J1: sighs...I don't know whether I've got there yet...I am grasping what's behind it even if I am not producing very much...yet, you know...I'm not sort of well I mean, we shall all never be like Hazel will we anyway? because the age difference and the fact she's, it's her life...so that's another sort of aspect of it; but ...I don't think I am very artistic yet, you have to....I feel I have moved on and I am understanding what she's getting at although I'm not perhaps reproducing it (Chuckles) very well, but....you know, to the best of my ability. Chuckles again. (with satisfaction).

Other interviewees did not think they were creative and were not so interested, preferring to learn set sequences and exercises.

V1 appreciated learning from a caring, responsive, non-judgemental, relaxed person who facilitated well. Sessions gave her a new interest. Music was important as it enabled her to move and exercise, but for her it was exercise to music rather than creative dance.

## **V1**

J: Do you express yourself in the classes.

V: Not really, to be honest, I love going to it, I love all aspects of it. Hazel is (Pause) just the best teacher that you could wish for. When I say teacher, she is the best person, she's just ... she not at all kind of hierarchical you know, she is like just like very laid back.

V: For me, I suppose, it could almost equally be an exercise class. Maybe an exercise class to music

She also thought that music was important for interpretation and encourages expressiveness adding to the pleasure and challenges and this enabled her to dance.

## **V1**

J: Right. So, is it the music that helps you to express yourself because you mentioned that earlier?

V: Yes, I don't think I would be able to, well I am sure this perhaps applies to a lot of people, I don't just think I could just dance, but I don't really like to call it dancing. Prancing without the music (Laughs)

However, she did not consider herself to be a creative person as she thought her other hobbies were sufficient creativity in her life.

## **V1**

I'm not, I don't consider myself to be a very creative person... I don't feel the urge to, I mean I do a bit of knitting and a bit of sewing and I love, I love being creative in my garden and that's the only outlet really, I suppose I have creativity for cooking...But you know, I'm not a painter....

Several interviewees mentioned that they welcomed not having to memorise precise set sequences. However, others enjoyed the challenge of learning choreographed sequences and working towards performances where they needed to perform group pieces precisely.

When I founded Vivacity, I did not intend it to become a performing company. I wanted to offer another dance choice with regular open dance sessions. I knew

creative dance was beneficial from my own experiences as a teacher and older dancer and I wanted to share my enthusiasm with others. Neither did I intend to offer “wafting about”<sup>19</sup> movement. I wanted to encourage the development of active older people’s dance capacity rather than being just a short participatory project. The grants I gained enabled participants to benefit from learning from dance artists who were encouraging, knowledgeable and enjoyed working with older people.

Robison (2006, 2015) suggests it is important to encourage creativity in education and throughout adult life. This has implications for ways dance activities are promoted and described and encouragement and support given in sessions. All interviewees enjoyed themselves even when they did not think they were creative.

Brinson et al (1991) emphasised that dance, like other arts, is a particular form of knowledge and experience in its own right. All ages can benefit, using their imagination and developing their capabilities. It is not just a physical activity but a form of communication, expression and release.

Tharp (2006) suggests that as we age, it is harder to recapture the recklessness of youth when many ideas flew easily from us. She suggests older people compensate for this with ideas captured and connected together from their wisdom and experience. She considers creativity comes from hard work, routines and habit rather than the romantic notions that creative acts are transcendent, inexplicable Dionysian inspirations.

These are good reasons for active older people to have regular sessions over time rather than participating in short-term projects because they can benefit from developing their creative and physical capabilities. Self-confidence and good habits can develop including learning from others and increasing one’s own creative capacity. Humour and laughing together is common in Vivacity sessions and this encourages a relaxed atmosphere where creativity and sharing ideas flourish.

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<sup>19</sup> A common creative dance negative stereotype is dancers “floating” about with no purpose, moving their arms around their bodies or high in the air

Hazel emphasised how beneficial it was when knowledge and skills are shared. Rather than thinking herself as “the expert” with all the knowledge, she welcomed dancers’ input and experience. She did not want her participants to see her as perfect with all the answers. She encouraged participants to work creatively together during parts of the sessions. She also thought carefully about ways to publicise her dance sessions. She was keen to include the term “dance” in her publicity rather than emphasising exercise. However, she was aware, doing this could put some people off and inhibit them, especially terms like “creative dance” because many people do not consider themselves to be artistic.

Not all interviewees considered themselves creative because to them, creative activities were about fine art, professional artists or talented people. This shows some older people need encouragement to think of themselves as creative beings who can express themselves and this will change perceptions of themselves.

**(Recommendations:2,3,9,10)**

## **F5. Freedom, joy, spirituality and connectedness**

### **Overall themes**

- Active older people
- Dance
- Community- local national
- Challenging perceptions
- Connectedness

### **Relevant nodes from interviewees' node tree**

Benefits, social, emotional, spiritual benefits, community and connectedness, mindfulness, joy, happiness and positivity, reasons and purpose for dancing at this stage of life; freedom and time, attitude towards life and retirement, best thing being the age you are, dreams, having choices, transition, ageing and ideas for the future, new opportunities, present life dancing, sorting out how and where I want to live, caring for yourself, love and self-esteem, hobbies, wellbeing and active, wish for the world,

F5 explores emotional/social aspects of being an active older person and considers these aspects when participating in creative dance activities This includes feelings of freedom, joy and connectedness. Spirituality is developed through relationships and creativity encouraging increased peace, harmony and wellbeing. King (2009) states powerfully the need for a vision of hope. She suggests religious traditions and secular modern life need to address issues that are tearing the world apart. She suggests that spirituality is not retreating, being isolated, silence in one's heart or stillness of mind, but rather

*"...arising out of the experience, spirituality implies the very point of entry into the fullness of life by giving meaning, value and direction to all that humans do and are" (P195)*

She suggests this is achieved through interaction, arts, sciences and learning from the sacred and the secular. Through dance, connectedness and spirituality can be experienced. Freedom and joy are emotions that can be experienced whilst dancing.



Dance liberates the person and it can be thrilling, enabling participants to forget other issues in their lives. It is a chance to live “in the moment”.

Toni has found creative dance a surprise and very welcomed in her life; especially after years of demanding work and caring for others. Negative feelings and the mundane are left behind for personal quality time and the chance to experience freedom.

### **Toni**

T...It is totally new and so I am enjoying it. I can't believe I am enjoying it!

J: What do you enjoy about it...can you say?

T: (Loudly) Just the freedom...only I am sure there is a nice fancy word for it I don't know it, but me especially when XX our teacher say be creative and just do your own thing it is lovely because I can't believe someone like me...who has always worked in factories and clean people and things like that... are poncing around dancing...it's so, you know it's just totally different. I just LOVE it. I love the movement and I look forward to Wednesdays. I Love it.

Ken also enjoys the freedom and moving through space as well as the challenge of mastering of sequences so that you can let yourself go.

### **Ken**

K: ...A sense of...freedom of...energy...Filling a space...Moving through space, yeh its...it's a very freeing type of thing. I mean even if you have to do something set.... or we do that little pattern dance, and you know, I found that quite challenging when we first were doing it

J: Yeh

K: and so on, but I really enjoyed doing it and you get to a point you're, you're actually have mastered the moves and you can really let yourself go in it and that's in a sense where you're always trying to get to and that is really enjoyable.

Eliza, once she knows what she is doing, is free and experiences elation. She thinks this easier to experience through creative dance rather than more structured dance genres.

### **Eliza**

J: ...How do you feel when you dance now?

E: Ohhhh...Like a totally different person!

J: Right.

(Starts laughing loudly)

J: Can you explain that a bit more or is that a bit difficult?

E: Perhaps it's my inner child coming out I don't know...I don't know...

J: OK...Yeh

E: There's that feeling of...kind of.... Elation...especially once you've remembered what you're supposed to be doing

J: Right, yeh

E: Once you get over that and when you're trying to remember what you are supposed to be doing it's...it's more of a task I suppose....

J: Right

E: but once you kind of got a handle on what you're supposed to be doing then can ... you are free to enjoy yourself in the movement and...it's just...it's just a totally wonderful feeling, it's ...I don't quite know just how to describe it!

J: OK

E: HAPPY!

J: Happy OK. Great

E: HAPPY!

Maria states her feelings directly. She is now aware of her physical limitations, but dancing is still important to her, she dreams about it and she joins in as much as she can.

### **Maria**

I have always loved dancing.... Always, loved it...And even in my dreams I am still dancing....

J: So what does dance mean to you?

M: Joy...Definitely...Definitely Joy. Makes you feel good...makes you feel very good and...I don't really know what to add to that. I wish I could do more.

Some interviewees were developing unexpected ways. The transition from working to the uncertainties of the future gives new senses of freedom, adapting to change and recognising responsibilities. Each person experiences this differently. Several interviewees were experiencing new emotions positive one as well as uncertainties about the future.

### **Bryony**

B: I think it means to me that I'm developing a side of myself that I didn't know existed and that I am enjoying exploring. I think it means to me that I am developing in a way that's different to the way that I ever been developed in the past. That I am, it's opening a new avenue for me that I didn't think would be available.

Another example is Penny who articulates with great clarity the transitional state she is in. She had to contend with illness, bereavement and moving. She is experiencing freedom and this gives her confidence. She also recognises that she now has choices about how to lead her life in the future.

### **Penny**

"You know, it's rather strange position to be in isn't it.... Alright, I've taken this very big decision to... move from where I was and I sold up and I put my stuff in store...I now live in the shared house with seven others in SW city...I've been making the most of this freedom which is a bit scary...I had a lot of fear to push through to actually do it, I thought about it for about three years. So, my life is still in very much a transitional space until I find something that suits me, to try and rethink a lot of things really. To live differently and I wish to live obviously as fully as I can, at the age and stage which I am at...I've really been trying to forge the foundations of a new life...  
...I've never had that freedom in my life before, I don't think at all, or it hasn't felt like that, so I'm quite pleased with what I have achieved so far and I feel that had been very confidence boosting. It has helped me to...let go a lot of

fear associated with...being so ill and...my husband dying and with the house...I think the freedom is absolutely fantastic. If, as long as, I mean my health is not 100 % but then whose is? Especially because of the problems I am left with because I was so ill... it took many years to recover...I'm as good physically I have been for actually quite a number of years...it's freedom, there's choice, there's opportunities, there's stimulation, mental stimulation, I think this stage of our life is a huge gift...and you know it is up to us to make the most of it. The glass is half full for me.

V1 had not liked her job. She thought the best thing about her age was not having to work and having time for new experiences.

**V1**

J: So, what is it you enjoy now?

V: I enjoy that even small things you can take your time over ... you know, people say, I don't know how I ever had time to go to work. Well the reason is that you take much longer to do even the small things ...I can get distracted, I can ... start doing something and move on to another thing and.... I don't have to clock-watch all the time and so that's, that's really helpful to me.

J: So, it's like you're in charge of your own time and what you do,

V: yeh

Yildas, who is still working, is aware unexpected things can happen. She is looking forward to spending more time with her husband and family.

**Yildas**

Y: Well I don't know, you know sometimes people they get a heart attack, you don't know what's rounds the corner, but I'm thinking to have more fun, good, happy... enjoying the family, the grandchildren

J: Yes

Y: I enjoy my retirement with my ol' husband.

J: Right

Y: He retired but he still working .... Like three hours a day

J: Right

Y: Yeh I looking to have a nice time.

J: So you are optimistic?

Y: Yes.

J: There will be things to do in your life?

Y: Yes. Yes, lots of things to do more. I want to do more and learn more.

Yes, especially when I am going to be free no work, stress,

Ken has reached a stage in life where he has sufficient to live on. He appreciates the time and freedom to enjoy arts activities.

## **Ken**

K: There is a sense of freedom. It's quite nice that you don't have to do anything. I just, I'm not an enormous angel but I've got a little one. I am not wonderfully well off but I'm not poor either and throughout my life I've always well, when you there's not an awful lot of it around, you learn to just live ... on minimal amount and I have always managed. And ... you know, so, so having the time now plus still having some income ... I can manage on; I can do things like theatre. So .... freedom, great, I feel very positive.

The interviewees either were enjoying their new-found freedom and having more time to make choices and decide what to become involved in or were looking forward to having more time to do new activities and finding out how they might lead their lives in the future.

I asked each interviewee two questions following a "fairy magic-wand" coaching technique. I had found this useful when coaching managers because individuals could expand their thoughts beyond the mundane and consider aspirations. The interviewees used their imaginations and expressed their dreams. This included:

### **Personal wishes for the future**

- Fitness including physical and emotional health
- Financial security in later life
- Lasting friendships, meeting new people, staying in contact with family
- Visit relatives living abroad

- Finding permanent homes, readjusting to living in new locations
- Living near relatives but not be a financial burden or too demanding as an aged mother
- Continuing to work and/or volunteer, contributing to their communities
- Learning and participating in new activities including dance
- Dancing remaining part of their lives; performing
- Keep learning, continuing to enjoy life
- Keep up with grandchildren

Belle, Bryony and Penny were professional women in transitional periods of their lives, facing issues concerning financial security, new social relationships and having a settled home. Belle was considering whether to return to the US to be near her family if her husband died. Bryony and Penny were in temporary accommodation; both mentioned finding new partners. Both wanted to continue working.

J1, P1 and V1 wished to carry on with their lives as they were and learn new things Toni wanted to learn to keep up with her young grandchild and foster child. Yildas wanted to visit her aged parents in Australia especially as it would be the last time she saw them. She, like Belle, Bryony and P1 had family living abroad. They stayed in touch through emails, Skype and phoning and although far away they were still part of their lives.

Maria would have liked her eyesight to improve slightly but knew this was not possible. She wanted to keep healthy and independent. Penny wanted to keep fit, healthy and lead a full life. Yildas wished for good health. Eliza wanted to continue dancing as did Ken and Penny as. dancing was important to them and they looked forward to continuing for years to come. Health and wellbeing were seen positively within their lives and they wanted to maintain their health not as a chore but through worthwhile activities.

There were similarities between interviewee wishes at this stage of their lives but also individual aspirations that shows the individuality of each person and different life expectations.

## **Wishes for the world**

I asked “a wish for the world” to find out how interviewees thought about themselves in relation to others. Austerity and various conflicts were being reported in the press. By asking this question I thought it would give insights into their wellbeing, empathy towards others, spirituality and how connected they felt, as well as political inclinations.

Their wishes included

- governments needed to work for understanding between peoples
- resources need to be shared more equitably
- individuals developing their personalities
- less war and terrorism
- famine and starvation should be eradicated.
- all people have a right to develop their humanity. We need to get along not only as human beings but with other creatures. Green issues had to be addressed.
- more resources and activities for older people activities, more work for all ages,
- older people to be recognised as part of society.

Several interviewees looked for political solutions. Belle wanted governments to be more humane and less repressive, so people could continue developing their personalities and experience their humanity, a birth right as human beings.

J1 wished for less sectarian and terrorist kinds of violence; for the economic situation to be fairer with finances more evenly distributed

**J1**

... so that there aren't these poor people who haven't got anything whilst rich people sometimes have got too much.

Eliza wished politicians would provide sufficient resources to give older people, especially those on restricted incomes, the chance to dance or take part in other activities. Dancing and/or other activities would enable them to keep physically fit.

This was expressed similarly by V1 who wished that

### **V1**

People should be able to think more than where the next meal and food is from and they should feel safe. Things in the world appear to be getting worse. We have everything we need, even the people on benefits are probably not going to starve but I really hope for humankind that life is more than where your next meal is coming from and that everybody could fulfil whatever creative urges they have.

Ken believed attitudes were changing. He wished older people could stay active, carry on working, contributing and be valued just as much as other age groups; but he recognised there was still a long way to go.

Toni, Penny and Bryony were influenced by their religious traditions and beliefs expressed ways that the world could be improved for others.

### **Toni**

T: Stop kids starving in Africa. Since I was a kid in Sunday school and we had a little book of African babies with pictures in it and tell us to get money for Africa. There should not be starving children in Africa and other places. It should not be happening. So, my wish is "Please God, stop this starving in the world when there is so much food and technology to produce all this food. People should not be starving. Please God".

### **Penny**

P: A real acknowledgement of connection that we are all as human beings in the same boat together even if we are different people. I see that when I work with the homeless, I see it with some very posh kind of people at the Cathedral sometimes...we are all in it together not only as human beings but with other creatures and with green issues. At a human level the tribal thing of saying my tribe is better than your tribe has to end.

### **Bryony**

B: Peace and harmony and more integration between countries, races and religion with, no famine or starvation, no war no natural disasters. I mean



there are...I think our world as the stereotype of as God would have wished the world to be, a Paradise. I would like a pre-Eden paradise.

P1 thought politicians would not permit another World War. He wanted people to learn about their heritages, religions and taken-for-granted prejudices and ways they live and how these influence their thoughts and behaviour. He wished for more freethinking and philosophy so people would get on together. His own experience growing up in Singapore; bringing up a family in London and running his school that had a diversity of staff and pupils informed his ideas.

Finally, Yildas summed up her wish in a simple optimistic message, taking into account young, older people and families.

### **Yildas**

Y: "Peace and happy and no war. No war, No killing. No killing. Young soldiers, families, children. Happy world!"

Interviewees expressed optimistic, reasonable wishes for themselves and had sensitivity and empathy towards world issues and humanity. The findings above show a wide range of aspirations illustrating the wishes of eleven individuals from different backgrounds.

**(Recommendations:1,2,6,9,10)**

## **F6 Dance opportunities, structures, activities and funding**

### **Overall themes**

- Dance
- Community – national, international
- Work-based and personal

F6 explores my findings from my dancing activities and desk-top research. In Chapter 4 the operational aspects of my varied dance activities were critically considered and this finding gives further insights into various developments that are becoming available or are influencing the dance opportunities for active older people.

### **Dance opportunities**

My research enabled me to experience and identify a range of older people's dance.

Different types of dance opportunities are held in different venues;

- Regular open sessions or booked in advance termly sessions
- Companies concentrating on performances
- Intensive courses or learning days of various lengths over different periods of time,
- Projects with fixed timescales, with themes and goals often working towards a specific performance. These can be age specific or intergenerational.
- National, regional and local festivals and celebratory events;
- Laban inspired "Dance Choirs" brings experienced and non-experienced dancers together for performances, usually theme based;
- Flash-mobs in unexpected public locations.

Different dance facilitators bring different dance styles and genres to creative dance sessions depending on their dance training and interests. This will influence sessions' content as will the participants' abilities and interests. Some young and more experienced choreographers/dance-artists are showing interest in working with older dancers. For example, the Company of Elders' works with Sadler's Wells associate choreographers and some other dance companies such as Three Score Company in Brighton work with visiting choreographers. Independent dance

artists/choreographers are forming older people's dance companies. This includes Company A and Company B and others around the UK. There is increasing demand for older people's dance provision, but it remains limited.

Evidence for this includes people travelling long distances to attend quality creative/contemporary classes for example Bryony and Eliza had to come to London for their dance sessions. Mercury Movers sessions have long waiting lists and there are a lack of dance sessions and performance companies in many parts of the UK. TV dance programmes like BBC's "Strictly Come Dancing" and the opening and closing ceremonies of the UK Olympics 2012 popularised dance and there are increasing number of reports encouraging people to remain active. Older dancers can express themselves when they have chosen a style of dance they enjoy and attend regularly.

Gibson (2015) reports the population is not doing sufficient physical exercise even though the Olympics Legacy 2012 was supposed to create a fitter nation. Least progress has been made among lower socioeconomic groups. Cross-party strategic planning including joined-up thinking across government departments is needed. Public health and the NHS are showing interest in older people's dance activities especially for dementia, Parkinson's and fall prevention. The NICE<sup>20</sup> guidance for Wellbeing (2008, 2015) suggests that to keep adults healthy, exercise and physical activity programmes in the community are needed focussing on moderate intensity exercise including a mix of dancing, walking and swimming. National organisations like BUPA (2.8.2) and "Age UK – Get Moving" <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/health-wellbeing/keeping-fit/getting-moving/> promote exercise and getting fitter.

### **Complexity of dance networks and structures,**

This section is supported by a more detailed analysis (See appendix 10)

There are many ways active older people dance activities are offered including:

- independent dance artists and dance teachers/practitioners,
- grassroots organisations and voluntary sectors,

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<sup>20</sup> National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

- large arts organisations including theatres, arts centres and dance development agencies, universities, conservatoires and colleges.
- Health and wellbeing centres including hospitals surgeries, community centres

They work within, through and outside the commercial, public and voluntary and academic and health and arts sectors.

Different organisations and networks have particular values and philosophies, training programmes, history and traditions. There are professional and industry bodies that support and promote them. Provision is influenced by different interest groups, funding regimes, organisations collaborating and ways facilitators are trained and career development.

Dance sessions and older people's performing companies are located in cities including Plymouth, Liverpool, Cardiff, Brighton, Ipswich and parts of London. Many sessions are held in community halls around the country.

The demand is increasing but different factions in the dance world are responding to this in different ways. Dance goes across different sectors and this can be disadvantageous especially as it has only relatively recently gained recognition as a separate art by the Arts Council; as an academic arts subject and does not have the same status and commercial success as many sports, drama and music activities. Dance does not always get sufficient resources and recognition and falls through nets when reports are written. I found that it is increasingly gaining a stronger voice. and suggest this will benefit those offering dance provision and benefit the health and wellbeing of the whole population as well as the UK cultural life. Although older people's dance is not yet a high priority in various factions of the dance world this is beginning to change.

## Intergenerational Dance

Another form of active older people's dance is participating in Intergenerational activities where they can dance with children, younger adults or older people. Outcomes lead to successful performances such as "The 127.5-year-old girl", a project in which I danced. (Forbes and Nuzel 2014). I reflected afterwards:

Everyone got on ...the dancing was well planned, achievable without it being too taxing. The choreography had clarity.... the artwork and scenery were imaginative and the atmosphere of the church dance space was enhancing... We rehearsed well, there was a mixture of improvised movement and learnt choreography. The two performances were fun and impressive. It was lovely my family and friend came. I enjoyed dancing outdoors then inside. This worked well and the mixed aged audience enjoyed it. A worthwhile project to participate in and I hope I can work with the choreographers again. I loved the costumes, magic, music and artwork as well as dancing. It was interesting participating in a project like this with children and adults of all ages. However, I am not sure if I will participate in another again because I don't like hanging around and it took up lots of time during weekends .... (Reflection Note April 2014)

Some choreographers have created high quality works using people of different ages and abilities. For example, Rosemary Lee's site-specific works *Common Dance* (2009) and *Square Dances* (2011) which were filmed and gained wide recognition. Lee (2008) is motivated to work with wide ranges of participants and respects the positive power of groups coming together for a common creative process and watching the effects it has on their lives. She finds it inspirational watching others dance. As a dance-artist and film-maker she wants her work to reflect and communicate common humanity and thinks this can sometimes be successful when there is a cast of all ages with varied experience.

Laban Dance Choirs create intergenerational performances led by experienced facilitators, often based on themes with music. Usually large numbers are involved.

Local community dance projects are events bringing generations together who might not meet otherwise. An example was Big Dance 2012 "Tottenham International Olympiad 2012". Flashmobs can bring different generations together usually for fun, surprise or to shock. In 2012, Company A danced at a local

shopping mall with a young adult martial arts group and a homeless people's choir, so shoppers had the chance to see older people performing with younger adults in a public space. Different dance styles were learned and everyone was friendly. It was part of a larger project including intergenerational performances held at Claremont and O<sub>2</sub> Indigo.

Another aspect of intergenerational working is where young dance artists/choreographers work with older dancers. They develop their leadership and choreographic skills whilst building relationships with older people. Often older participants experience and ideas can be included in the choreography and they appreciate the young choreographers working with them. Good, trusting, respectful relationships are built when attitudes and expectations of all involved are positive and constructive. New choreography develops meeting the varied capabilities of all involved. For example, Vivacity offers regular sessional work to a young dance-artist where she successfully develops choreography with the older participants.

Friendly relationships flourish. Another example is Growing Older Disgracefully, a dance company based at Liverpool, John Moores University. Older dancers, dance teachers and inexperienced adults dance together, leading towards performances. Young university dance students meet, are taught and co-perform with the older adults. This impresses on them that dance is no longer seen as a short-term career. (Amans 2013: 51)

Intergenerational dance activities challenge perceptions of older people dancing because older and younger people are seen together, and both learn and see other generations' capabilities. These projects can attract large intergenerational audiences because, as well as the general public, family and friends come to support them.

## **Funding**

Funding/sponsorship influences the types of older people's dance available to those from different backgrounds in different parts of the UK. The Arts Council, Lottery Fund, charities and foundations such as the Baring Foundation and Esmee

Fairbairn Foundation, distribute grants and sponsorship for particular projects meeting their organisation's sponsorship criteria and aims.

The Department of Health identified dance as particularly effective for engaging inactive and older people and recognised "the unique contribution that dance can make to health and well-being" (Department of Health, 2009). Burkhardt & Rhodes (2012) suggest dance for older people can be offered with varying levels of intensity from armchair exercise, tea dances through to more vigorous contemporary dance being applicable for people at all stages as they progress through older age. This is important because this report recognises older people are not one cohort all wanting the same.

NHS commissioners are planning, beginning to promote and encourage arts activities for health and wellbeing by building new partnerships and collaborations. For example, in March 2015, local mental health commissioners invited me to lead a seminar on hobbies, including dance, for older people recovering from mental illness. This was successful and I was invited again. In December 2015, Vivacity was invited to perform at an ex-hospital-patients' event organised by a local NHS patient commissioner and an older people's forum. These examples demonstrate that locally NHS and public health commissioners are collaborating with grassroots organisations. However, in both these examples, there was no payment to Vivacity. To sustain itself it requires funding of some kind. Funding bodies often show no interest in sustaining existing successful organisations/projects but prefer "new" projects. This makes it difficult for organisations like Vivacity to continue.

Some dance activities are self-funded. The costs for venues, facilitator(s) and administration are covered by participants' fees. Organisations or independent dance artists provide a "service" offering dance sessions and/or rehearsals for performances. In some locations, this is practicable because costs are low and easily covered. In London, suitable venues are expensive and dance facilitators' fees are usually higher than elsewhere. Fees can be prohibitive for those on lower incomes or pensions.

Large organisations seek grants to fund their outreach work. There is no obligation for them to collaborate with smaller organisations and cascade money down.

Smaller organisations are sometimes in competition with them. Grassroots organisations such as Vivacity exist because they are organised by enthusiast volunteers. As manager, I obtained grants using my previous management skills and experience in filling in complex application forms. Organisations without managers or volunteers with the right skills do not survive especially if there is no funding to buy-in support.

**(Recommendations: 2,3,4,5,6,7,8)**



## **F7. Community of active older dancers**

### **Overall themes**

- Active older people
- Dance
- Community – local, national
- Challenging perceptions
- Work-based and personal
- Connectedness

### **Relevant nodes from interviewees' node tree**

Benefits of dance, structure to my week, dance competing with other activities, community and connectedness, community of dancers, friendship, networks, dance audience, commitment, performances, reasons for dancing at this stage of life, attitude to life and retirement, having choices, new opportunities, wellbeing and active,

I have found from participating in varied active older people's creative dance activities that there is a momentum gathering across the country. Older people's dance companies are forming and performing at older people's dance festivals and conferences; different types of dance are being offered and older dancers attend whenever they can. Dancing is fitting around other personal responsibilities and they are committed. Some older dancers have previous dance experience whilst for others, it is a new experience. If they enjoy sessions and/or find them challenging, they are motivated and want more.

### **Eliza**

J...What's most important to you then at the moment in your life?

E: Well for me I think ... at this stage of my life having the opportunity to do something that I really enjoy doing. I.... dancing ... especially at my age... that has given me a new focus which is just for "me" and I have never had that before in my life.

Some seek out facilitators who inspire them, others are pleased to find accessible sessions where dance facilitators provide dance for them.

## **Eliza**

I was surprised to find that somebody was wanting to do a ballet class with over 60s or over 55s.

J: Yes

E: that surprised me and so somebody who is going to counter a stereotype; which was good

In F6 a range of dance experiences offered in London and around the United Kingdom have been noted. There is cross-fertilisation; in London, different combinations of older people are participating regularly in dance activities, sometimes several times a week. For example, some dancers in Company B also attend Rambert Mercury Movers and/or Sage, an older people's ballet company. Some older dancers attend dance sessions at the Claremont Project and Mercury Movers. Some facilitators collaborate, sharing work for example Company B's facilitator collaborates with an independent dance-artist who also lectures on a dance university course. There is increasing expertise, camaraderie and friendship. They are committed, support and encourage one another and share common interests including developing their dance capabilities. Activities continue as long as dancers are interested and sufficient resources are available. Individuals leave and new dancers join. These features are common to a Community of Practice.

During the first Sadler's Wells Elixir Festival September 2014 different dance companies performed and there were chances to socialise with other older dancers from different parts of the country. Some dancers, (including myself), appeared in more than one performance piece because they were performing with more than one company. Older people dance companies participated in other festivals including the Capital Age Festival, SAGACITY and BIG DANCE and regional festivals in various parts of the UK.

A growing community of older dancers and numerous local networks dance together and some perform publicly. The word is spreading. Older people are encouraging friends and acquaintances to join in. There is a growing audience especially when family and friends are encouraged to see performances. This develops further interest and increases audiences for dance generally.

Although my research is not about professional dancers extending their careers, there are some common features between them and older people who are choosing to dance. Lansley and Early suggest making and practising dance is relevant to its social context. It is a life-force that everyone has a right to participate in and watch and future new dance languages, vocabularies and processes will develop rather than committing to one technique or style. This agrees with Bartlett's, Layson and Bannerman's theories.

**(Recommendations: 1,2,3,6,9,10)**

## **F8. Some Influential conferences**

### **Overall themes**

- Active older people
- Dance
- Community – local, national
- Challenging perceptions
- Work-based and personal
- Connectedness

Some influential conferences took place towards the end of my research showing increasing interest in older people's dance, arts and cultural activities. This indicates dance is gaining a stronger, confident voice in the external world.

### **Sadler's Wells Elixir Festival and "Art of Age" Conference" (2014),**

I attended this conference as a researcher and older dancer to gain deeper insights about older people's dance as an art form and how non-professional older dancers were perceived by the professional dance performance world.

Performances were held at the festival over the weekend with older professional dancers and the Company of Elders dancing on the Main Stage and twenty other older people dance companies performing on the Lilian Baylis stage.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=itgXmbZrPJw>. This video involves older professional dancers, Company of Elders dancers and some non-professional dancers expressing their reasons for dancing as well as choreographers and audience exploring the importance of dance as an artform to continue rather than end once the older body cannot maintain a high level of physicality.

The conference morning sessions emphasised health and social benefits of dance and the afternoon concentrated on older dance performers as artists. From my perspective, I found there was an implicit demarcation between older professional dancers wanting to extend their careers and ex-professional dancers returning to dance after many years for the Elixir Festival and those who were non-professional older dancers. The Company of Elders, Sadler's Wells own flagship company was highlighted which was well deserved and expected. There was no explicit recognition that there was any commonality and blurring between older

people participating in “active older people’s creative/contemporary dance” and older professional dancers or ex-professional dancers who wished to dance again. Dancers in the new older people’s dance companies (who danced on the Lilian Bayliss stage) dance regularly, developing their capabilities and expressing themselves. They want to dance and perform and some danced to a high level when younger. Ex-professional older dancers (who might have had short dance careers or suffered injuries) and committed amateur dancers have some attributes in common. It is the performance that matters, and ways inner-selves communicate through their bodies to audiences. Older dancers bring life to the dance space experience, expression, emotions, physicality and embodiment so communicating particular qualities. This was the first Elixir conference. It will be interesting to see if this demarcation continues or whether in future there will be more recognition of the blurring between professional and non-professional older dancers with more older dancers being recognised explicitly as performers. The next Elixir Festival and Conference is planned for 2017 and in the meanwhile, Sadler’s Wells is offering more older people’s dance workshops.

### **People Dancing**

This international Community Dance event, (November 2014) organised by The Foundation for Community Dance (FCD) brought artists and leaders together to share practice across different international, economic, social and political contexts. It was important for the Community Dance Sector especially when seen in juxtaposition with other conferences held during 2014-2015. It included a workshop on older people’s dance led by Fergus Early. At the conference the FCD announced “People Dancing” as its new name. Castle (2014) reported that Community Dance comes loaded with connotations and images that are no longer useful. The political context and people’s expectations are different from when it began. Nowadays it is not a separate genre or style of dance that requires particular training. She suggests it involves understanding, thinking about dance and how it evolves over time. Dance has benefits for people and they influence dance activities. She sees the boundaries between a “professional” and a “non-professional” becoming blurred. In the future, dance artists might prefer creating art for its own sake rather than work with communities to bring about social transformation. This has relevance for my research. Many older people, including

myself, participate in dance for its own sake and benefits, neither because we consider ourselves vulnerable or disadvantaged, nor would we want to be perceived in that way. Castle implies, in future, the FCD will advocate more inclusivity and a new understanding about dance activities. Those participating will want to dance on their own terms. This encourages dance artists' choreography to be freer, using their personal artistic expression and creativity with people (including older people) who will dance from choice for their own reasons including expression, vitality and wellbeing. Her ideas triangulate and complement my findings.

As different genres and types of dance cross-fertilise diverse, varied choreography will increase. This might lead to more work for dance facilitators as they will be less reliant on casual work (waitressing, pub-work, nannying etc.) to supplement their incomes. The NHS and public health are taking interest in arts activities including more dance for older people. This could extend dance-artists careers if there is more dance in schools and in the community for all ages especially for older people.

### **“New Ideas and New Inspirations”**

The first ever UK dance industry-wide conference was held in April 2015 aimed at dancers, choreographers, dance administrators, dance teachers and interested medical and health professionals. It was the forerunner for establishing a new dance strategic industry-body to respond to demands for transforming the dance workforce and supporting talent.

The promotional materials did not refer to demographic change or the potential demand for older people's dance. High priorities included dancers' career development and dance within education. The intention was to gather ideas to inform a strategy document. The editorial in the UK Dance on-line magazine promoting the conference included some articles. One, written by Early (2015), concerned an Italian Conference La Terza Danza (2014) concerning older people's dance.

An editorial box in the margin noted:

*“Dance UK acknowledges that the industry-wide conference will not be able to cover everything. This is why it is crucial to utilise important information from other conferences, listening to our international contemporaries, when forming the policy document”.*

This demonstrates the organisers’ awareness of older people’s dance issues but they did not consider them to be a high priority. These issues were not on the conference’s agenda. I watched some of the conference on-line. Jan Burkhardt gave a presentation that mentioned older people’s dance. I emailed her immediately, informing her about my research. She replied saying there was a conference about older people’s dance in 2016. We agreed to stay in contact. Subsequently, I learned she is advising a Greater London Authority (GLA) team preparing the conference.

### **Cultural Commissioning Programme (2014-2016)**

This programme indicates that Government departments take creative arts and culture more seriously than before. Culture and arts have an important role to play even though funding is limited. The programme is to help the arts and cultural sector to engage in public sector commissioning and to support public service commissioners to develop awareness of the potential for arts and culture. The sector’s strengths encourage innovation and creativity. The programme worked with arts organisations, museums, libraries, and policy makers to bring sectors together to influence policy makers, and raise the profile of this work.

### **Public Wisdom Conference (March 2015)**

This conference held in London on ageing, creativity and the public realm, was developed by Cubitt Arts Collective bringing together sociologists, artists, performers, anthropologists, philosophers, designers, architects and others including older people, to share and debate relationships about aging and the public realm. It was an innovative multi-disciplinary conference and my research ideas complemented what was being presented. There were presentations, discussions, performances, informal networking and discussions on new ways to

share ideas and seek solutions and agreement that further exploration was needed.

**(Recommendations:1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10)**



## **F9. Some Influences prior to 2009**

### **Overall themes**

- Active older people
- Dance
- Community – local, national
- Challenging perceptions
- Work-based and personal
- Connectedness

Although this research report suggests the demand for “active older people’s creative dance” was kick-started by the “Imagine” television programme and recent policy/decision-makers interest, it would be wrong to assume that older people’s dance has only been available since 2009.

Sadler’s Wells “Company of Elders” started in 1989 as part of an outreach programme linked to its Arts Club. In other parts of the UK dance has been offered by university departments, independent dance-artists, community organisations and Dance Agencies. Dance organisations often concentrated on “gentle” movements, dance as therapy, social dancing or outreach work. Many community dance projects were short-term so did not develop participants’ dance capabilities and skills because participating was considered sufficient. Projects were often dependent on meeting funding requirements so targeted to meet certain criteria. Some dance groups organised by individuals or small groups of enthusiasts inviting others to dance with them were often exclusive groups.

### **“Marks in Time” an International Conference on Dance and Ageing (Jan 2007)**

Chaturangan, an Asian dance company in partnership with Liverpool Hope University, organised this conference that explored three main issues:

- how dance could be used within the voluntary and charity sector to encourage wellbeing,
- ways professional mature performers can be sustained and developed
- ways to nurture best practice within community groups of senior citizens.

There were showcase performances plus debates about the aesthetics of ageing and whether there was an audience for performances by older dancers.

### **Green Candle Dance Company**

Formed in 1986, by Fergus Early, (dance provider/practitioner 1), an ex-professional dancer who was in the forefront of creating the Community Dance sector and New Dance has offered dance in the community and educational contexts for all ages and abilities including intergenerational activities, youth activities and older people. Its main aim is to provide dance experiences, including participation and watching, especially for those with least access to dance. The above aim follows the traditional ethos of Community Dance and continues to be offered to vulnerable and less advantaged people. The organisation has started offering training opportunities including accredited courses for practitioners wishing to lead older people dance activities. Since 2012, Green Candle has organised SAGACITY festivals which offer workshop sessions and gala performances showcasing various older people performance groups. Vivacity's newly formed performance group danced at SAGACITY 2013 and 2015. SAGACITY shows how Green Candle has initiated innovative older people's dance performances for enthusiasts.

An early document "Growing Bolder" (undated) a guide to creating dance with older people, emphasised the physical and personal psychological benefits of dance when working with older people. It included sections on choreographing, participants' abilities, expectations and interests. The booklet outlined ways to organise sessions. Interestingly, there were some similarities to dance sessions I facilitated in local residential care homes as an adult education tutor in the early 1980s. I was a pioneer of older people's dance although I had not realised it at the time.

### **Charter for Older Dancers (1996)**

The FCD, a professional body, wanted to extend opportunities for professional dancers to perform and work in the community. This Charter encouraged ways of working with older people, thinking about them positively and considering their particular needs. Simultaneously, it raised career issues because dance-artists

age. These included issues concerning equality of opportunity, participation, need for expression, a new aesthetic, increased performance opportunities, career development, accessibility to dance; health and wellbeing benefits and older people's learning styles. These Charter issues are still relevant twenty years later showing commonalities between those working as ageing dance-artists/facilitators and older non-professional dancers. In 2009, new amendments included the need for more debate, new language, a network, and further funding. The revised charter was posted on the FCD website in 2012. All these issues are relevant to this report.

The influences in this finding laid foundations contributing to further developments and making contributions so that new opportunities are now increasingly available for active older people who now wish to dance regularly.

**(Recommendations: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10)**

## **F10 Dance is not always taken seriously**

### **Overall Themes:**

- Dance
- Community - local and national
- Challenging perceptions
- Work-based and personal

F10 shows how dance (other than ballet) only relatively recently gained serious recognition as an art-form. Although recognised as having a contribution to make to older people's health and wellbeing it is still not included sufficiently in research.

A detailed outline of the development of Dance is included in Appendix 2. Until 1980, dance was not recognised as a distinct art-form in its own right by the Arts Council. It had been a sub-set of the Music panel. In 1977 London gained its first dance officer and in 1978 some grants and dance fellowships became available. Few choreographers or dancers were paid prior to this. Different companies formed and disbanded. The First Dance Umbrella (festival) took place in 1978. "New Dance" was on the fringes of the Dance scene and was partly about choreographic experiment and about altering ways people thought about dance. It had openness and was fuelled by politics and artistic ideas. (Mackrell: 1-3) During the 1980s, there was increased pressure to seek sponsors and increase audiences. It became important how performances looked and were promoted so they could attract bookings and funding. Performances continued and dance audiences grew. The language of dance developed. Its popularity continued to increase especially since television programmes and film popularised dance. As is shown in this finding a new confidence has grown within the professional dance world. Modern, post-modern, contemporary dance and ballet, musical theatre and different sub-sets of these continue to be recognised and are developing although "older people's creative dance" is only beginning to be accepted.

The New Dynamics of Ageing Research Programme

<http://www.newdynamics.group.shef.ac.uk/about-the-programme.html>

Many of the 35 projects involved were multi-disciplinary. It included an older people's focus group and many academic papers. It followed on from earlier "Growing Older" Programmes that were directed by Professor Walker to generate

knowledge to extend the quality of life in old age and make contributions towards policy and practice. I attended the Handbook (Harding 2015) launch and eagerly went on-line and carried out a word-search to see the contribution dance had made during this extensive research programme. Surprisingly and disappointingly, I found dance was not mentioned in its own right. The only dance mentioned in the main text was "guiDANCE" and once in a list with gardening. I searched "exercise" and got a limited response. I wrote to Sheffield University to enquire why dance was not included, explained my interests concerning older people's dance activities. I suggested it demonstrated a real gap in academic thinking because dance is a life-enhancing activity and popular. I received a warm reply agreeing the benefits of dance and with points I raised including lack of any specific dance projects. Projects were commissioned during 2004 and during the following two years there had not been any dance applications that got through the peer review processes. There were elements of exercise in some projects. (email 5/2015)

Dance has so much to offer older people but unfortunately is often not recognised by academic researchers. Another example concerned a report based on a consultation carried out by UK Active Research Institute and NCSEM<sup>21</sup>-Sheffield (2014). Organisations offering physical activities were invited to participate in a "Promising Practice" survey. A total of 952 programmes were submitted over a four-week period. This included a submission I made about Vivacity. I thought it worthwhile to spend time to do a submission to inform researchers what a small grassroots organisation offering dance in an inner-city neighbourhood was achieving. Dance is included within the sports and leisure sector. The report "Identifying what works for local physical inactivity interventions", (Public Health England November 2014) built upon the recommendations of the All-Party Commission on Physical Activity (2014). The project aimed to take a rigorous, objective look at local physical activity interventions across England to identify 'what works'. It was the first time such a large scale and academic approach had taken place. It provided evidence of strengths and weakness of the sector concerning interventions and variable levels of monitoring and evaluation. I eagerly searched for "dance" to see where it was mentioned and ways in which it

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<sup>21</sup> National Centre for Sport and Exercise Medicine based at Sheffield University

had been recognised. The only mention was “accorDANCE” “guiDANCE” and “attenDANCES”. Initially, I contacted UK Skills Active<sup>22</sup> and suggested dance might have been missed because it fell within different sectors, government departments and academic disciplines but suggesting it was a popular physical activity. I explained I had submitted Vivacity and it was unfortunate that dance was not included in the report’s main text. The response was cordial explaining the methodological approach used. A few months later, I received an individual evaluation for Vivacity (Appendix 11) from the academic board giving it a Level 2 categorization “emerging practice”. The evaluation contained some positive comments. The last section gave suggestions for gaining the next level rating. It suggested gathering quantitative data such as waist sizes and carrying out control groups. I replied stating my disappointment; reminding them that they had missed including dance as a popular physical activity in their report. There was increasing research evidence about the benefits of arts for health and wellbeing including dance. Quantitative evidence based evaluations were appropriate for large scale organisations such as universities and large provider organisations. Grassroots organisations like Vivacity, often organised by volunteers or independent dance practitioners, did not have time, resources or inclination to collect data such as waist sizes or organise control groups. Older people attend sessions to dance and collecting such personal data was intrusive. I suggested grassroots organisations were important because they access hard to reach people and can encourage them. These organisations could be evaluated, for example, using evaluations based on NEF Five Ways to Wellbeing (2008, 2011) or WEMWBS <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/med/research/platform/wemwbs/researchers/> Well-run dance sessions get participants involved in regular physical activity. More joined-up thinking was required across different government departments, sectors, universities and large and small organisations so older people (and all children and adults) had choices of physical activities they wanted to do.

The requested requirements demonstrate the difficulties grassroots dance organisations have showing success. If small grassroots organisations, such as Vivacity disappeared because of lack of funding and recognition their contributions

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<sup>22</sup> Skills Active is the Sector Skills Council for Active Leisure, Learning and Well-being that includes seven sectors: sport, fitness, outdoors, playwork, caravans, hair and beauty.

would be lost and there would be less dance available. (Based on email May 2015) I received a courteous, vague reply. I continued to raise these issues when attending AAA Lifestyles and Physical Activities working group and other events.

These two research examples provide evidence that dance is not seriously considered when health and wellbeing issues, physical activities and ageing are researched although more quantitative and qualitative research is now coming forward. For example

- RAD “Dance for Lifelong Wellbeing” project report (Watts 2013);
- Dance for Parkinson’s Programme 2010-2014 (Houston and McGill 2013)
- Older people’s dance activities the first UK survey (People Dancing/Aesop to be published November 2016)
- Ageing Artfully: older people and professional participatory arts in the UK, London (Cutler 2009) for The Baring Foundation (See below)
- ‘After You Are Two - Exemplary Practice in Participatory Arts with older people’ (Organ 2013) for The Baring Foundation

This was an important finding because dance is a life-enhancing activity that covers many aspects of what it is to be human and is popular with many older people and yet it is not being included in main large-scale research reports.

Vivacity gained a Tottenham Skills Active grant to encourage inactive older people to participate in a physical activity. The evaluation required was straightforward and I was able to collect the data required. At local level, dance was being taken seriously and Vivacity has continued to make a contribution to get older people active and challenge perceptions about them; and increasing numbers are participating. This has promoted older people’s creative dance.

Other recent reports and conferences included in this report concerning arts, culture, health and wellbeing and joined-up thinking, show dance is now being taken more seriously. In “Ageing Artfully” Cutler (2009) notes there is an ageing society and discrimination and disadvantage are faced by older people. There is no specific arts policy for them and so no systematic funding. He suggests arts benefit people personally and there are societal benefits and concludes more research, policy and funding are needed and scaling up of activities such as

festivals, Local Authority and health partnerships, care regulation; networking between arts organisations, practice development, training and standards, major venues, leadership of older people, coordination and sector advocacy need to work together in new ways. This is a long list and complements what my research activities explored. New ways to collaborate and network are happening to find new political and social solutions.

In future, as more research about dance becomes available, more choices for older people's dance could be provided and academic institutions might more readily recognise its importance.

**(Recommendations: 2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9)**



## **F11 Vivacity - a grassroots organisation**

### **Overall Themes:**

- Dance
- Community- local
- Challenging perceptions
- Work-based and personal
- Connectedness.

F11 explores my findings from my work activities founding/managing Vivacity as a local community organisation. In Chapter 4 the operational aspects were critically examined and this finding gives further insights into developing a grassroots creative dance organisation for active older people.

Vivacity is a constituted not-for-profit organisation now in its sixth year. 30-35 sessions are offered each year. There are three trustees and a book-keeper and I manage the organisation; we are all volunteers. The dance is creative, participants have preferred dance movements and develop further over time to extend their dance capabilities, gaining confidence, self-esteem and communicating their inner feelings, interpreting and dancing with others.

Our facilitator, a young, responsive dance-artist encourages everyone. She took over from Stakeholder B in 2012. She is open to ideas, patient, laid-back and enjoys facilitating our sessions. She is appreciated and well-liked by participants. Her sessions are well-planned and adaptable and she has artistic freedom. She is open to suggestions and provides an eclectic mix of music. Participants encourage one another and are not judgemental. They join in and do as much or as little as they wish. Most people have no previous experience of this kind of dance although some danced when younger. Vivacity's facilitator has made great progress developing a flexible approach for developing choreography. Frameworks are developed during sessions. Older dancers' capabilities and confidence increases whilst they enjoy learning and dancing together. Dance sequences are improvisations within structured, practised frameworks using music. These sequences can become performances. Most participants are relieved they are not

required to learn precise, detailed choreography. Vivacity is sometimes invited to dance at events and dancers volunteer if they are available. These performances have been well received by audiences. Comments include that they are surprised by our energy, diversity, how we express enjoyment and friendship. They are surprised by the interesting choreography and ways music is interpreted and the expressive quality of each individual dancer.

The diversity of the dancers is one of the organisation's strengths. This did not happen by chance. I used my leadership skills and welcoming approach to ensure everyone is comfortable when they attend. Newcomers join in with ease and each person is respected, equal and appreciated with kindness. People from different social and ethnic backgrounds feel at ease dancing together

As stated in F6, funding is important for grassroots organisations' survival. I had clear aims, objectives and costings but completing grant applications is time-consuming because there are different criteria and each application has different questions and rules for answering. Vivacity's funding initially came from the local Neighbourhood Office, then a private bequest followed by three separate grants from Community Development Foundation (CDF), then Tottenham-Skills Active. The first two grants included sufficient funding for management fees, so I received some remuneration for setting up and managing the organisation; dance-facilitator and venue fees, other administrative and miscellaneous costs. This changed in 2012 when CDF awarded Vivacity a smaller matched funded grant. I was committed so decided to volunteer my skills and time so that Vivacity could obtain matched funding. I wanted Vivacity to continue as a well-managed organisation. I knew from desktop research that dance sessions would become increasingly important in future and so continuing to offer them would make a local contribution. Vivacity could contribute as an example of good practice and there was experience to share. Importantly, those attending wanted it to continue. The CDF grants matched-funding only supported the costs of hiring the studio and sessional dance/artist facilitator fees.

Vivacity offers "open sessions"; participants only pay for sessions attended. If fees were termly in advance, there would be less administrative work and more reliable income. However, I wanted local older people, especially those who had not

participated in creative dance activities before, to attend. I knew many had competing responsibilities at this stage of their lives. Less advantaged people would find it prohibitive to pay large sums up-front, especially if they knew they would not be attending all sessions. I kept fees affordable, otherwise it would discriminate against the people I especially wanted to attract. This meant extra time and effort collecting fees, accounting, and having a less predictable income stream. It meant that Vivacity could not continue without grants or some sponsorship and collecting participants' fees. Fees are essential and contribute to the running costs not provided by grants such as insurance, website, promotion and celebrations. As manager, I monitor variable costs carefully and ensure fees are used wisely. There are three volunteer trustees who support and advise me, as needed. This approach encouraged a wider range of people to attend; many come regularly and numbers are increasing.

Vivacity was included in "Age and Dancing" (Amans 2013) textbook, as a case study showing how a grassroots organisation used small-scale funding to get established and was managed effectively. This promoted the organisation, giving its aims and ethos exposure and demonstrated that people from diverse backgrounds could participate in creative dance activities together. It also promoted the term "creative dance" for older people because students, lecturers and practitioners read the case study.

A performing group was launched in December 2012, so dancers could volunteer their time as performers for matched funding and share their enjoyment of dancing with others, promoting older people positively, contributing actively within the community. The most recent Tottenham-Skills Active grant is not match-funded. The grant covers the venue and facilitators' fees and only lasts until summer 2016.

The BIG DANCE "International Dance Olympiad" (2012) project was an additional project for Vivacity and an inspiring, fun experience for older participants as Toni narrated in F3. This project fitted in well with the open sessions. This project was only possible because a grant was successfully gained. We made good links with the local school's campus, children and their teachers and families; the schools, neighbourhood and Vivacity all benefitted.

In 2013, an article about Vivacity appeared in “Sardines” the main amateur theatre magazine. (See F15e, Appendix 5). I worked closely with the journalist and suggested other dance organisations he might research. This article about Vivacity also mentions my research.

Over the years, participants gave the following reasons for NOT attending some sessions

- grand parenting or aged parents caring responsibilities
- hospital appointments, illnesses mental and physical
- volunteering, including church activities e.g. helping homeless
- meeting family or friends who live far away
- travelling and holidays, benefitting from off-season offers
- working part-time, returning to fulltime work, attending job interviews
- visiting family abroad for extended periods of time
- taking up a new interest
- moving away from the neighbourhood
- Death.

All the above is realistic and triangulate with other findings in this report, including the data from interviews. The reasons indicate the complexities, and responsibilities participants have in their lives. It is pleasing when people return after long absences because they wish to continue dancing again and for friendship. If they leave it is also pleasing when they ask to stay in contact; some become ambassadors showing they want to remain connected, interested and tell others and so promote us.

After sessions, some dancers stay for refreshments and socialise together. This is similar to Hazel’s sessions where dancers gather after sessions. It is an important benefit because of the social interactions and friendships made.

Co-chairing the AAA older people and creative arts group enabled me to give a grassroots perspective and share views to challenge perceptions about older people and dancing. This was a national role where I became further involved, influencing and promoting more arts activities and benefits of creative dance and

particularly the needs of a small grassroots organisation with others who had more specialist interests or worked in larger organisations.

The Vivacity website promotes and informs the external world including potential participants and possible funders. Initially, I developed an extensive website including all Vivacity's activities, photos and videos, history and performances. The provider changed their server so I re-designed a sleeker website. It is seen all over the world. I receive queries from television and film production companies seeking older people for a variety of programmes. These organisations want to include older adults and so older people are no longer being ignored and marginalised.

The main communication with participants is by email or phone for those who do not use email and word of mouth.

I enjoyed founding and managing Vivacity, using my leadership and management skills to enable increasing numbers of local active older people to become involved in creative dance and to offer paid work to young dance artists and to promote creative dance locally and nationally.

**(Recommendations:1,2,3,4,6,7,9,10)**

## **F12 Findings from boundary spanning work activities**

### **Overall themes:**

- Community-local, national
- Work-based and personal
- Connectedness

F12 gives findings about some relevant work activities that directly contributed to my research. Boundary spanning reaches across borders to build relationships, interconnections and interdependencies (Williams 2002). The skills required include listening, communicating, influencing, promoting, championing, dialoguing and sharing ideas. Through these activities new challenges can be faced and taken forward. The technical term “Boundary Spanning” (Williams 2002 O’Reilly and Tushman 2004) was new to me but I integrated it as a theoretical concept for skills and abilities I used extensively during my previous career especially when having a sector liaison role at City & Guilds. This included creating cross-functional teams with colleagues from various departments and collaborating together, cutting across the bureaucratic “silo” departments. I liaised with representatives from different sectors and organisations, bringing information back into the organisation. In addition, I used boundary spanning extensively during voluntary community activities over the years, bringing people from different social and cultural backgrounds together and collaborating with Local Authority staff. For example, when chairing the development of Chestnuts Community and Arts Centre from 1980-1987.

I found myself using these skills again in new work contexts. Organisations had to find new ways of working together and communicating in different ways to solve new challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Having left my full-time career and as an older freelance person, I was free to think and behave as I thought appropriate. I participated independently, no longer tied to any particular organisation. My expertise acquired through my fulltime career, voluntary work, new knowledge and skills gained from managing Vivacity, other work activities and desktop research put me in a strong position when working with new colleagues. I chose to participate and contributed my experience from previous careers. This included skills gained from working in a “Learning

Organisation” environment. I had extensive committee and team-working, presentation, marketing and coaching skills as well as years of voluntary local community experience. I was used to communicating with people from all levels of society and different backgrounds.

I chose the events and activities to attend that I considered useful and interesting for my research and personal development and within my resources. My wide-ranging perspectives and experience differed from others and I had skills and expertise to share. I made different contributions from those working or representing specific organisations and who were at different stages of their careers.

This reflexivity and double loop learning made this aspect of my research inquiry positive and worthwhile. My research benefitted as I worked with others and they benefitted from my varied positionalities, learning and knowledge I was gaining from my research. In Chapter 4 examples of invitations to become involved were included. Those invitations surprised me at first. I had to remind myself that I had relevant wide-ranging professional skills. My boundary spanning skills contributed because representatives from different organisations were grappling with new ways of working together across sectors and disciplines. I realised they had self-doubts too. I found my contributions were appreciated and were often included with others’ ideas within meeting notes and taken forward as action points.

Initially, I was unknown at meetings, so others were unaware of my capabilities, knowledge or expertise. Not wanting to impose, I applied my leadership skills by listening and waiting for the right time to express my ideas. I did not want to be a threat or regarded as “has-been” given token “respect” but then “ignored”. This did not happen. I was networking and boundary spanning with increasing numbers of new colleagues and enjoying these new productive relationships. I gave my opinions, made my voice heard, dialogued and discussed with others, I appreciated new colleagues’ expertise, openness and willingness to work with me. My friendly, empathetic communication style enabled me to participate equally with them. I was told my expertise, positive energy, enthusiasm and my genuine wish to collaborate with others was appreciated. I promoted choices for people of all ages especially for active older people and “active older people’s creative

dance” and contributed towards more activities happening. I had control, chose how to be involved and used my time effectively. I found I was developing my professionalism to a new level. I prioritised carefully as I had time consuming responsibilities including my research activities, dance commitments, Vivacity management and my family.

Having chaired the Bridge Roundtables, I felt confident leading and/or participating with people from arts and culture sectors. I readily accepted the invitation to co-chair the AAA creative arts and older people working group and attended other AAA meetings including the Working Group Chairs’ meetings. My style of chairing, dialoguing and sharing ideas with arts practitioners and providers/practitioners worked effectively. I built positive working relationships with the DWP civil servants who serviced the working groups and they approved of my innovative approach.

At the AAA creative arts group, I set safe, non-threatening, non-competitive environments that enabled attendees with specialist work knowledge to contribute and share ideas. I had sufficient self-awareness to know I did not have in-depth, specialist knowledge about the professional creative arts world, although I was learning fast. My boundary-spanning stance enabled me to carry out leadership tasks and encourage everyone to work well together. My flexible leadership styles adapted, as required. This included being visionary, enabling and coaching, affiliative and collaborative, democratic, ensuring everyone had an equal chance, and, when needed, pacesetting and not often commanding. (Goleman 2002). Everyone involved was interested and some said the meetings were different from others they attended because they were positive, we aimed for achievable results and everyone enjoyed networking and learning from each other. My co-chair, an imaginative thinker and dance expert, had the freedom to participate as she wished. We worked well together and appreciated each other’s strengths. She thought my wide vision and experience was useful to complement the specialisms others brought.

In 2015, DWP support was withdrawn. The DWP continued hosting the AAA networking website. A sub-group to plan future creative arts working group strategy was set-up because there was commitment to continue.



Boundary spanning is difficult when people are not used to this style of working. Each person brings different intentions and different perspectives. However, once common understandings are reached, work can progress efficiently. For example, in March 2015 a meeting was organised by Age UK-London. Representatives from small arts organisations were invited. I attended representing Vivacity and AAA older people and creative arts group. The purpose was to plan a London conference to promote older people's arts. The meeting ended positively and everyone agreed the conference should happen. However, it had been a demanding meeting with different perspectives and expectations. I found myself becoming a bridging mediator between those who were strategists and others who were practitioner/providers from small arts or community organisations. Age UK-London representatives thought small organisations would welcome a conference, especially as they had acquired a grant, and were willing to organise the event. The Arts representatives made it clear they were only interested if key decision-makers and influencers who would listen, learn and dialogue with them were invited. They were concerned about survival and sustaining themselves. Their concerns concentrated on providing arts activities for older people and enabling them to remain actively involved in London's life. Most representatives were pre-occupied with funding issues and sustaining their organisations or facilitating activities. They all said they networked locally. Age UK-London had not realised there were so many arts organisations working with older people in London nor aware of their concerns and priorities. The arts representatives were unaware that Age UK-London was a freestanding organisation separate from Age UK, the national lobbying organisation so had less power than they expected. I understood and empathised from both perspectives. I used my boundary spanning skills, knowledge and experience as best I could. Other participants mentioned afterwards, they appreciated my contribution. I could have remained silent but decided to contribute to the meeting. It ended with positive, agreed outcomes and the following planning meeting was productive as everyone knew the intended goals. A successful conference was held in December 2015. Key speakers included representatives from the GLA, public health and a funding organisation. It was a lively event where all delegates contributed ideas and networked. Further joint-working continues during 2016. The AAA creative arts working group (whatever its new formation) has a different, complementary role to play.

Local networks encourage small organisations to collaborate, and can have a stronger voice to promote and champion activities; for example, the Haringey Dance Forum.

I have longstanding working relationships with colleagues from different organisations I worked with during fulltime career and voluntary community activities. These have been important for my boundary spanning activities. Our relationships were built on professional and personal ethical values including trust, honesty and integrity. We know we can contact each other and work well together.

Successful networking can develop when different representatives are introduced to one another. For example, I organised a meeting for two directors who were in different networks of mine. One was a director of a national citizenship lobbying organisation and the other the Chief Executive of a well-known national research and funding charity concerned with creating positive impacts on older people's lives. Both were interested in furthering community participation. We had an informal meeting to share ideas. I knew intuitively they would get on because they shared similar work interests and values. Following the initial meeting they decided to collaborate. Another example was a national organisation that asked me to introduce an outreach worker to local Tottenham contacts. I willingly agreed and we met and arranged a meeting with a local mosque as I knew the lay leader. I accompanied and introduced her. It was a friendly informative meeting. This enabled the mosque to learn more and get involved within a citizenship network.

The "Flourishing Lives" project was another example where my boundary spanning activities were effective. The project aimed to catalyse transformation in the "older people's day services"/"day centre" sector by bringing together progressive people and organisations and quality research and evidence of best practice <http://www.claremont-project.org/vision/36-flourishing-lives>. I suggested the Claremont CEO join the AAA Creative Arts working group and he became a regular attendee and hosted working group meetings on Claremont's premises. The CEO collaborated with others from this working group. He is involved in the new planning group. There are possibilities for Flourishing Lives to go forward and entwine with the transformed AAA creative arts group. This is another example

where different organisations can benefit through networking and working together.

**(Recommendations: 7,8)**

## **F13. Organising and managing two Bridge Roundtables**

### **Overall themes:**

- Active older people
- Community- local, national
- Work-based and personal.

F13 gives findings and outcomes from the two Bridge Roundtables, a specific project I organised, administered and led on behalf of Bridge Research. The outcomes could not be taken forward, but the experience influenced the direction of my research and my learning concerning working with representatives from art organisations. Being involved increased my confidence to chair AAA creative arts group and increased my knowledge concerning collaborative ways of working in arts, care and community.

The approach I used was different from formal meetings where information is reported and discussions take place. In such meetings, some people often dominate whilst others do not actively participate. As chair, I was friendly, stayed focused and persistent. I led the two roundtables so everyone had the space to communicate if they wished and be listened to in turn. Some participants found it difficult to listen and take their turn but I managed to get everyone involved in the dialogue and they became committed and good outcomes were reached. Some outcomes were obvious, but others were creative, innovative ideas because participants were learning from each other and this encouraged new ideas to emerge. I enjoyed chairing both Roundtables and was pleased I had kept to the structure I planned.

It was satisfying to find the participants thought Bridge was well placed to bring together care organisations, artist practitioners and providers because its directors and advisors were respected, trusted, had good reputations and wide experience across many networks in different sectors. As experienced professionals, entering the second half of life, they, including myself, had previous knowledge and expertise and identified with those who were making similar transitions and adapting to change. Providing cost-effective quality art activities achieved through cooperating and sharing ideas could lead to new arts projects and research being commissioned, including participating in European programmes.

The Bridge Roundtables were timely, contributing to the arts and older people's agenda that was gaining momentum. The planning process was informed by my research activities and the roundtables informed my research. Two projects, an "Artist in Residence" service and a successful "Writers in Residence" pilot, were initiated following the events. However, the strategic plan Stakeholder A and I drafted was not taken forward. This experience demonstrates how difficult it is when small, independent organisations rely on individuals to take forward innovative far-reaching ideas without the infrastructure or resources of larger organisations to support them.

However, the Roundtables created innovative ideas which informed later advisory and committee work and writing this report.

**(Recommendations: 7,8)**

## **F14. Creating a local coherent message TEDx Tottenham**

### **Overall Themes:**

- Active older people
- Community – local and national
- Challenging perceptions
- Work-based and personal

F14 critically reflects on a local event, TEDxTottenham where I presented “Sing Dance and Smile”. This gave me the opportunity to present my ideas publicly, including those from my research including the interviewees, new work activities and previous experience, and my personal ideas about Tottenham as an older, long-term local resident. It provided opportunities to meet some objectives for my research. My presentation appeared on You-tube so would be scrutinised by others. The strategy for learning my presentation enabled me to present confidently and succinctly. The effort was worthwhile. I presented in a relaxed, open way and the audience was responsive. The presentation is at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ksRWurOqr24](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ksRWurOqr24) in an edited version without the introductory section. I received many positive comments. The link was circulated by the AAA through their newsletter and website. The presentation covered issues from this report as well as informing it. It is another example of my work and research reflexivity, progressing and informing practice., I was developing my professional skills further which informed and gave me evidence for my research. The presentation included positive issues but also identified local concerns such as unemployment, lack of resources, poor mental and physical health and isolation but argued that sports, leisure and participatory arts including dance activities were high priorities just as important as other priorities and were not the “icing on the cake” but “the glue” for local communities.

The 2014 Tottenham regeneration strategy prioritised improved access to jobs and business, education and training, housing, transport links and having a strong and healthy community. I was involved in some aftermath discussions on ways to heal and repair the local community. Some local people have continued to challenge the strategic plans priorities at consultation meetings because, in their eyes, the local authority is not taking local people’s wishes and lives sufficiently into account.

**(Recommendations: 1,2,4,6,7,8,9,10)**

## **F15 Challenging perceptions**

### **Overall Themes:**

- Active older people
- Dance, Community – local and national
- Challenging perceptions
- Work-based and personal
- Connectedness.

### **Relevant interviewees' themes, from node tree:**

How people now live in their local communities, performance showing capabilities, image-ageist, stereotype, television and media, what is an elderly person; young people; attitudes towards life and retirement, best things being the age you are; contributing back, how life is now; what life for people is supposed to be, ageing and ideas for the future, dance giving new opportunities,

F15 has five sub-sections giving examples about challenging perceptions in different ways:

F15a Images and stereotypes of older people

F15b Through work activities

F15c Academic environments

F15d Through media

F15e Through articles

## **F15a Images and stereotypes of older people**

Tensions and differing perceptions influence ways older people perceive and internalise the way they think and feel about themselves and ways society and communities perceive them. This affects provision, attitudes and behaviour.

Eliza recognised that older life is a broad spectrum with many variations

### **Eliza**

E: People who are in their 60s are likely to be very unlike people in their 90s they are even likely to be very unlike people in... their mid-70s there's a huge...variety of...abilities.... physical abilities, mental abilities, all sorts of abilities....and how, you know, how people conduct their lives and everywhere in between. I don't know that anybody should have an image of older people because we are a very, very, varied group.

Toni thinks some old people are trying to be seen as youthful and others who might be perceived as old are keeping active and healthy.

### **Toni**

T: I don't think there are old people nowadays, you know. Because nowadays you see, people my age group like in their 60s and they have got leggings on... nails all long and I think bloody hell...you know, and everyone is having a bit of tuck here, there and their boobs are hanging out and I thinking...corrr ...sometimes I literally have to look and think (whispering) no they're older than me! So I just look at old people now and think...well what age group are you?

J: Right...Yes.

T: There are like two types of old people. One has got an overcoat on and they act very old

J: how old do you think that is now?

T: in their 80s...like well into their 80s.

J: Into their 80s...yeh

T: but then you got the ones who are between like 55-70 old

J: yeh...



T: and some of the clothes they're wearing, you think...come o-o-on! act your age go to Marks and get decent clothes!!  
(Both laughing)

Toni related how she was surprised by the older people who attended a local centre for older people and had more flexibility and capability than her, and she recognises that they continue to be active as they age.

T: I'm fascinated cos at XXX<sup>23</sup> most of the elder people are well into their 70s and 80s

J: Yes

T: and I do Pilates and I think I am the youngest one in there and they can stretch and they can put their legs right over and they can do Yoga and all that.

J: Yeh

T: you know and I'm sweating

J: right

T: and I said to one of them the other day...how do you do that...and she said oh darling I been doing Yoga for 20 odd years.

T: because we don't see them as being active but because things have changed all these old people are swimming and dancing...and doing all these different things ... they are very, very, active.

Penny recognises some baby boomers are gaining power from increasing numbers and positive change might come about, she is not sure because of the emphasis on youth. Older people's contributions could be taken more seriously as they are in Eastern societies. As Houston (2013) suggests the emphasis on youthfulness increases opportunities for marketing and consumerism.

Penny, rather than suggesting that the baby boomers are consumers of younger fashion or make-up argues that they will have more power because there will be

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<sup>23</sup> A local older people's centre

more of them. Some have lots of money and have more to say because of experience.

### **Penny**

P: I think the reality is there is change and I think the baby boomers are going to be in the forefront of that change you know a lot of...retired baby boomer types will have a lot of money which means, I don't think that is necessary, but as such it means they will have more power,...spending power and clout...and as we get to be a much larger group

P: we will have more say, I don't know, but then then of course young people, (Pause) there is such a, you know, emphasis on youth to the detriment of experience and old age.

She then agrees that there is emphasis on youth but thinks this is changing.

P: I don't know, I think it is changing but I, I don't know how far it's changed do you?

She concludes this will be desirable because older people will be regarded as people who can make a contribution.

P: I think it is desirable of course that would be desirable, people to see me as something to offer, to contribute but then our society hasn't been the way as say Eastern societies

Penny empathised with young people, recognising their difficulties

P: because I love young people...Yes, oooh its terribly difficult time, a terribly difficult time to be a young person. We had it a lot easier in some ways.

Toni gives a counter argument and thinks her children want their parents to stay fit and look good whereas she thinks this stage of life is when she can chill out and enjoy life.

## **Toni**

T: I tell you what is weird, because, I'm like, I am in my 60s and I thinking I don't have to worry about my diet anymore... I can just chill out like and here my son...who's a keep fit fanatic...he says, "look at the state of your belly mum".

J (Laughs)

T: He say, "Mum I never known your belly to be that big...I'm not telling anymore you're my mum". I think...for God sake...gives me a break...you know...because he keeps on our case

J: Yes

T: He's given up with his Dad...but we get told off by the kids...and on one hand I'm having my son telling me I'm too over-weight and on the other hand I have my daughter saying...oh come on mum put some make-up on...

She suggests another advantage of being older is having more confidence, humour and standing up for yourself. Older people do not have to prove anything and they can be who they are. Toni illustrates this describing what she learned from colleagues at work.

## **Toni**

T: ...when I was forty I decided I wasn't going to be scared of anyone...before I was always scared of upsetting someone

J: Yeh...

T: you know...I think because I was always brought up being told oh you no good at this...you no good at that...

J: yeh...

T: my self-esteem has always been very low...actually going to the prison to work helped me a lot

J: Yes

T: because as it happens I am very strong woman and they taught me a lot and I was lucky that the nurses I worked with...they were all African nurses and one English nurse from Yorkshire

J: yeh

T: and they were all strong, big and they taught me a lot and it has been good for my self-esteem...but I...like I said I am happy that I reached the age of 60

J: yeh

T: and I am just going to make the most of it.

The interviewees gave a variety of images of older people. This included physical aspects such as slower walking, talking, having older faces and needing help in their homes when isolated. However, often the interviewees still feel the same.

Yildas related how she still feels the same as ever and often acts as an informal carer for neighbours which is informal volunteering. Bryony did not consider herself to be old because, to her, being old means needing assistance. Penny thought people in their 50s should not be included with those in their 60s, but she recognised that with redundancies there were reasons why this happened. She appreciates when older people are depicted by what they are doing and have achieved.

### **Penny**

P: I mean I love seeing any pictures or photos or anything where, where older people are depicted as active and the terrible thing with the Boston bombing but the picture went all over the world was that 78-year-old man who was part of the blast and was a marathon runner and actually finished the marathon.

Ken was not aware of being stereotyped himself although he knows stereotyping exists and Eliza thought there was less than there used to be.

### **Ken**

K: Anybody's got to be valued for who they are and what they do.

### **Eliza**

E: I think probably people are less stereotyped than they used to be, perhaps, but there is still this tendency to put the whole 60 – 101 band of people in one category as elderly which I feel is wrong..... But possibly

overall there are fewer stereotypes ... that's probably the only stereotype that applies to older people is to just put them onto one bag as elderly and not address their differences.

From the above examples given by interviewees it can be seen there are a range of views and often although older people know they are older than younger people they do not consider themselves to be old or meet the stereotypes or prejudices that others in society give them.

A subjective approach to “active ageing” and “ageing actively” is taken by Stenner et al (2011), who, using older people’s transcribed interviews, show active ageing could be understood in relation to physical, psychological and social factors which co-exist in complex combinations. There are subjective active/passive distinctions emphasising enhancement or diminishment of activity. Their findings suggest policy-makers need to avoid imposing top-down generalities and include specifics of older people’s positive and negative lived realities. Policy makers’, service-planners’ and researchers’ ideas about active ageing can be different from ways older people think about themselves. “Being old” is not only about chronological age but a complex relationship concerning physical conditions, appearance of the body and the subjectivity of age within different social contexts (Featherstone and Hepworth 1991). Stenner suggests their findings have implications for theory and policy practice involving deterministic “cause and effect” frameworks such as those used for the WHO determinants of active ageing as noted in Chapter 2, where “activity” was stripped of subjective relevance and presented as a set of objectively measurable variables. Their research suggests the need for sensitivity to the on-going tensions between facts and active aspirations. Dialogue that includes listening sensitively and including diverse voices and older people’s needs are necessary. They suggest research in future needs to adopt approaches that do not treat the subjective and objective findings in isolation and suggest more collaboration between experts and ordinary people.

This complements my research where I have shown that collaborative ways of working, including the involvement of older people is becoming increasingly important. The AAA from the outset involved older people as well as any interested organisations and practitioners. Experts often think differently from the

people included in their research; for example, that people over 50 are in a state of decline or people dance because they are weak and need physical exercise. Older people are not a homogeneous group and there is wide variation with different experiences, ways of perceiving one's age and experiencing being older.

The "Age of No Retirement" held conferences and debates in London (March 2014) and Manchester (April 2015) to challenge perceptions and encourage positive ageing. They have identified a number of prototypes to take forward. They aim towards an age-neutral, multigenerational world which will be achieved by business, government, media and citizens — old and young working together. They believe the ageing narrative has to change from ageism and negative decline to optimistic potential. They state

*"Conventional retirement has already been retired...the transition between midlife and serious old age is growing in importance. It represents an extension of the same subtle interplay between continuity and change that accompanied every other transition in life. The age of no retirement deserves careful consideration."* [www.ageofnoretirement.org](http://www.ageofnoretirement.org)

To end this sub-section, there is an inspirational image of active older people enjoying a dance activity. J1 and her husband attend trad-jazz dance weekends at a nearby seaside resort where 300 people participate.

## **J1**

A lot of them are older than us and one man is 90, and a lot of people well into their 80s and they are still getting up doing all the fast ones and they dance practically every dance.

## **F15b Active Older People performing dance**

This sub-section analyses examples of findings from my work activities as an older dancer. They concern ways older people are perceived by different generations and in society; ways images and preconceptions can be challenged so contributing to changing attitudes.

### **Older people performing creative dance**

During the last five years, peers and I performed in several central London venues including Sadlers Wells Lilian Bayliss Theatre, Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank and O2Indigo, as well as locally at arts festivals and schools. These are included as evidence in various sections of this report. Performing as older dancers was exciting, exhilarating and enjoyable and the culmination of weeks of rehearsing. There were challenges remembering the dances, overcoming anxieties and not wanting to let other performers down. Audiences were varied depending on the events and venues. Feelings, emotions as well as visual images were communicated directly to audiences by older dancers expressing themselves through their bodies. Feedback included

“you were inspirational” or “it brought tears”.

This demonstrated audiences were emotionally moved and “touched” by what they experienced and the passion, expression communicated as well as surprised and challenged by what they saw. Sometimes, there was cheering or people came afterwards giving enthusiastic congratulations with positive feedback. The way we danced not only surprised people but, I suggest, gave some younger people hope. Seeing older people enjoying moving and being embodied can be inspiring whether the qualities are lyrical, flowing, rhythmical or vigorous, subtle or whole-body movements. As Yentob commented in 2009 when he narrated the Company of Elders programme

*“The programme was life affirming as the arts are about curiosity and the potential about what you can do. This is what is so inspirational; the learning curve can carry on and on” Alan Yentob (2009).*

Performing can challenge perceptions and shows older people's dance in purposeful meaningful ways. Older people are no longer invisible, passive and marginalised but expressive, energetic and artistic. Their older bodies can be seen as channels of communication rather than unattractive, unsightly and static with limited physicality.

During BIG DANCE 2012, I had the opportunity to perform with Company A in "Dancing Voices". This large-scale work brought together 150 older dancers and singers for a dance and singing project culminating in a high-profile event at the QEH, Southbank Centre and also involved, simultaneously, dancers in Glasgow for their Merchant City Festival. It enabled new and experienced older dancers to perform innovative choreography devised by Natasha Gilmore. There was commitment and we learned and rehearsed for weeks in separate groups. Gilmore's aim was to produce high quality performances that challenged preconceptions of older people showing that a product of artistic quality was possible. She was convinced dance was a powerful medium capturing beauty and honesty. She used the strengths of the older dancers. (Gilmore 2012) Music from different decades was used. Company A danced to "Ghost Town" presenting the 1980s riots. This was great fun to perform. <https://youtu.be/FyNb32XYABw> There were challenges including learning choreography, synchronising our moves, learning to lift dancers safely and remembering the piece. It was an opportunity to participate in a huge performance, meet dancers from other companies and dance on a large prestigious stage.



### **F15c Academic environments**

This sub-section gives examples of findings from two work activities I was involved in when I was sharing my research and work experience in two different academic settings.

#### **Women, Age and Media summer school (WAM) 2013**

I attended this summer school. My presentation involved images of older people participating in creative dance as a cultural activity. I influenced academic researchers by promoting older women in different ways from the usual media stereotypes and giving a visual presentation, which included pictures of different active older people dancing and intergenerational activities from my varied work and dance activities. I received positive feedback and delegates were interested in my research.

#### **Presentation to Occupational Therapy students**

The lecture at a West London university was successful and lively. It was important that students attending my lively presentation, gained different perceptions about the capabilities of older people, making them more self-aware and hopefully want to learn and research more and enjoy dancing themselves. They are the next generation of professionals who will be working with increasing numbers of older people from different backgrounds so it was important they could challenge their own assumptions about older people, work with them as individuals and also think positively about their own ageing.

## F15d Through media

Popular culture, led by the media and advertising industries champion a young flawless aesthetic and ideals of remaining youthful in body and appearance. A mature female is aged between 25-44years. If older people express themselves, they are deemed eccentric (if wealthy) and dotty (if less affluent) (Houston 2013).

Toni expressed similar ideas about ways people are perceived. This is complex, and the media often do not portray the real lives of older people.

### Toni

J: I mean ...if you think about the media though...what kind of images have they got of older people?.

T: We are dead! The media are thinking you are old and just shut up! It's time for young people. There's changes within people themselves but the media is still the same.

J: So how old is an old person in the media?

T: I think by the time you are fifty you're past it...you know...I don't know...it's just...I don't really see about old people now. Before you knew who were old

J: Yes

T: but now grandparents are in their 30s

J: Yeh...true

T: it's a funny age group

I was surprised to find the following internalisation by Segal (2014):

*"You haven't changed at all" are words I love to hear when meeting people I have not seen for a while. Guiltily, I cherish the thought that I don't look my age, and like to believe friends and acquaintances when they flatter. So do all of my friends, I notice, and I've learned to offer these reassuring words myself."* (Segal p174)

Segal has internalised looking younger as desirable, considering it a compliment from others and she does the same to them even though they all know it is not the

case. They are socially constructing their worlds where ageing is perceived negatively and they are knowingly deceiving themselves. These intelligent academic, feminist, activists admit these internalised perceptions rather than accepting who they are and accepting their ageing positively. Segal then continues suggesting current promotion of healthy lifestyles; exercise regimes, beauty treatments and invasive surgical interventions encourage people to believe they can grow older free from the standard signs of ageing. She cites Featherstone (2001) who argues personal worth becomes tied up with the ability to match approved fitness and slimness regardless of age.

Consumer society combines inner body health and body functions with outer body appearance and controlling the body in social space. Advertising promotes youthfulness, beauty, energy, fitness, freedom, enjoyment and fun, where people have to be energetic and maximise life.

During my research, I went to some events demonstrating these attitudes are beginning to be challenged. Older people are increasingly visible. “Bin Ageism” was an intergenerational project using media. “Advanced Style” concerns older women confidently flouting their fashion and gathering an international following from a blog and documentary about them. “Fabulous Fashionistas” was a British documentary.

### **“Bin Ageism”**

Through my varied advisory work, I built a friendly relationship with the director of “Magic Me” a charity bringing older and younger people together through arts projects to inspire and make real differences to people’s lives. “Bin Ageism” was launched in May 2014. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=teJg7lyMs4w](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=teJg7lyMs4w) .

This animated film was created because both older and younger people reported they were seen first by their age rather than who they were. Both groups experienced ageism, which affected them. The video includes amusing narratives about the impacts of ageism. The campaign asks people to pledge to Bin Ageism through three actions: Think Twice, Know Your Rights and Spread the Word. There was also a documentary about producing the film.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=v1E4ROMZY-E/](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v1E4ROMZY-E/) Sixth-form students and older people worked with “Magic Me” artists and BFI animation experts.

### **“Advanced Style” (2012, 2014) and Fabulous Fashionistas (2013)**

Another example of challenging the perceptions of older people is the work of photographer and blogger Ari Seth Cohen. His blog alerted the fashion and media industries and public to the contribution older women make to style. In November 2013, a conference at the London College of Fashion focussed on older women’s fashion which has been marginalised and neglected even though they are a large increasing consumer group. One of the older women in the film states:

*“They do not want to look young they want to look great”.*

Cohen and some of the New York women attended the conference and returned to London in May 2014 for the European Launch of his documentary film “Advanced Style” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWKTfqivbRQ> and [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Yy\\_0HsIZsk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Yy_0HsIZsk) There were several showings followed by debates with panels and audiences’ questions and comments. One message was that older women can be creative throughout their lives. I attended a screening followed by lively discussion about older people’s visibility and having “attitude”. Everyone agreed not enough was being done. I contributed from the “floor” mentioning the growing numbers of older people who were becoming involved in dance activities and were not intending to be invisible.

"Fabulous Fashionistas"(2013) was a British documentary about six older women demonstrating that women can be inspiring and active. They are not trying to be younger but they each have their own individuality.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PgTI1cwpfk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PgTI1cwpfk)

### **F15e Through written articles**

During my dancing-journey I wrote articles or contributed towards them. These were for Ransackers, The Association for Education and Ageing newsletter, The Laban Guild Magazine, “Dignity” a new Haringey magazine for older people

and “Sardines” the amateur theatre magazine (Appendix 5). These articles challenged perceptions about older people’s capabilities and promoted active older people’s dance disseminating my research findings more widely.

**(Recommendations for F15: 1,2,3,4,6,8,9)**

## **Conclusions**

This chapter has given detailed insights into the analysis and interpretation of the three aspects of my case study research. It was impossible to research every possible combination of the transdisciplinary topics from the interviews, work activities and relevant related desk-top research. I therefore analysed and interpreted my wide-ranging research using my data and experiences and this was explicitly written up in Part 1.

Part 2 goes further; it was wide-ranging in scope, covering what I interpreted and decided most relevant for my exploratory research. The 15 findings emerged from using the NVivo10 qualitative analysis from the node trees I had created analysed and interpreted from the 11 older people’s interviews and then synthesising them with desktop research and my various work activities. The different data and evidence clustered and interwove providing overall themes and sub-themes as shown in the templates in Part 1. I selected what I interpreted to be the most relevant findings, pulling the various topics together. Now these findings can be discussed further in Chapter 6 enabling recommendations to emerge.

## **Chapter 6 Discussion and Recommendations**

### **Introduction**

This chapter has two sections. Section 1 is based upon the context, project activities, analysis, interpretation and findings from previous chapters. It gives more insights enabling the transdisciplinarity of my work-based research to interweave further, so greater interpretation and synthesis is achieved. Section 2 lists the recommendations that flow directly from the findings and previous chapters.

### **6.1 Discussion**

It is not surprising, considering the state of flux of terminology, that it was difficult to find the language for the people and the type of dance my research was exploring. Language and attitudes have not yet caught up with the realities in the external world. From the start, I knew “active older people” was wordy. It is not an ideal term, but it gave clarity differentiating the people I was focussing on from those who were frail, vulnerable, or were not young adults. My term also includes people born earlier or during WW2 so goes beyond “baby-boomers”. As some interviewees reported they do not consider they are “old”, “needy” or vulnerable. Habermas argued, language is about power and relationships (Adams and Dyson (2007: 228-233). There are increasing numbers of older people, and they are more likely to vote. Many have better health and education than previous generations., They are acquiring a growing, stronger voice Language is gradually catching up. The “elderly” or “pensioners” can no longer be regarded as one passive, marginalised cohort. More realistic perceptions and understanding about the second stage of life is needed as has been shown by Cohen’s (2000, 2005) new paradigm and theories and his warning that positive aspects of ageing need recognising as well as being realistic about negative aspects such as loss and bodily decline. The realities of active older people’s lives are now gradually being taken into account.

The European Year for "Active Ageing and Solidarity Between Generations" (2012) sought to create sustainable active ageing cultures and embrace intergenerational solidarity. Decision-makers were encouraged to help people age

‘actively’ growing old in good health, living independently when possible and having a role in society.

Older people need access to meaningful activities. They require quality time for themselves where they can socialise with others who share common interests. This benefits society because more people will remain healthier, independent, participate in social activities and be less dependent on public services.

Issues concerning the ageing population continue to gain momentum. Walker warned his “active ageing” strategy had benefits but policy makers could use the ideas to be exploitative. Older people do have needs at various times during their individual lives. Public services, pensions and how communities live together are issues rising up political agendas. The ways older people’s needs are met will continue to be social/political issues. Many older people are reasonably healthy and have energy. They have skills, expertise, want to continue learning, be positive and contribute to society.

Decision/policymakers have sought ways for joint-working to find solutions during uncertain financial times and financial cuts in services. New strategies are developing to encourage older people to remain independent, age positively and have better lives. I have shown in my research that although some politicians such as Willetts (2010) attempted to divide older and younger people, suggesting an intergenerational crisis as they compete for resources, the issues are more complex because social factors such as class, gender, education and poverty affect ageing rather than just chronological age. These factors occur in different sections of society regardless of age and many older and younger people have more in common than differences. Walker (1990) suggests there needs to be a more critical stance by traditional social gerontology to counteract pessimistic accounts of older people being a burden and taking resources away from the young. The Age UK report (2014) showed the contribution people aged over 65 make to the economy and the Bin Ageism! Project is an example where commonality was found between different generations that led to better understanding and challenged perceptions about young and old.

Many older people have families and show empathy and concern for other generations. Individuals have personal narratives, behaviours, life-chances and experiences.

Change will happen as positive and negative aspects of aging are identified and further research undertaken. Negative ways of perceiving older people, inequality and ageism should increasingly become unacceptable

My work activities, although small scale, give examples of achievements at neighbourhood level. These include intergenerational and age specific activities where mutual respect and friendships developed. New organisations such as the Centre for Ageing Better (CAB) are being set up so progress can be made to benefit older people as individuals, recognising their different needs and this in turn will benefit society.

Ageism and stereotyping influence ways older people perceive themselves and ways others perceive them. This is reinforced by the media, especially consumer advertising and dominant cultural values. Houston (2013) argues British society is diverse and the demarcation between old and young is hard to define. She suggests that in cultures where youthfulness dominates, older adults are labelled and regarded negatively because they do not conform to the dominant idealised culture. Television programmes and films are gradually changing. For example, some advertisements are now including older people doing realistic everyday activities.

Houston (2013) suggests “Stay young, beautiful and live longer”, creates markets for increased consumerism. The health education sector and government policies find this approach attractive because it encourages people to take responsibility for their own health. My report is not promoting dance as a means to remain young, denying the ageing process. However, ironically, many older people who dance remain healthier with increased wellbeing and stay more active. I am suggesting that dancing is a human, life-enhancing activity for all who wish to dance throughout their lives. It is an enjoyable, expressive, creative social activity benefitting the whole person. Dance encourages individuals to regard themselves positively and experience their ageing bodies in new ways with increased self-awareness. When dancers perform, they are seen by others and affect them. This



can be a positive experience for the dancers and audience. I benefitted from getting involved in dance activities again and wish to continue for as long as possible, as do many of my dancing peers as well as interviewees. Freedman (2012) suggests, rather than clinging to lost youth and accepting marginalisation, new life maps are needed for the new territory opening up as more people live longer, healthier lives. He suggests new social institutions, market innovations, policies and a revised culture are needed. These ideas complement the CAB aims and issues being addressed by the Age Friendly Cities movement.

This is where my research fits. Gradually, I identified that perhaps “active older people’s creative dance” might be considered as a normal, mainstream dance activity in its own right, within a range of other dance options, participatory arts, sports and leisure activities. It was a developing social phenomenon. It could be offered in all parts of the country. Older dancers have life experiences, embodiment, emotions and relationships to bring to their dance. They can dance expressively and enjoy dancing with others providing opportunities are accessible to them.

Decision/Policy makers want people to age well. New ways of joint-working such as boundary spanning activities can bring this about. This requires resources and commitment. Burkhardt and Rhodes warned that without strong partnerships in the health and public health sectors or support from funding bodies, dance can only scratch the surface rather than play an effective role in improving the nation’s health and wellbeing.

My research and work activities show “active older people’s creative dance” can make a contribution, as can other kinds of dance. Previously, active older people had few opportunities to develop their expressive and creative dance capabilities over time. This is now changing around the UK. I was inspired by Hazel’s caring attitude towards all her older dancers, ensuring her dance activities were relevant and enjoyable. Her sixteen participants were committed, enjoyed dancing together and socialising afterwards. The three interviewees said they appreciated Hazel as a person and the way she worked with them.

I gained rich insights into her motivation for wanting to facilitate active older people's dance sessions and the empathy and kindness she showed. She found working with active older people inspiring and enjoyed learning from them. Rather than older people declining, she found them to be passionate and actively involved in many activities. She enjoyed leading them and said she benefitted from their experience. Her dance sessions were planned so each person developed gaining confidence, increased wellbeing, there were opportunities for being creative and expressive.

I am suggesting that increasing numbers of older people want to dance as embodied human beings with thoughts, feelings, lived experience and knowledge. They want to learn and be challenged. My research shows they continue participating in creative dance activities if sessions are accessible, welcoming, take into account differences and individuality as well as common needs.

My awareness about dance activities being included in different vocational sectors and academic disciplines including sports and leisure, health and wellbeing and/or culture and performing arts sectors, history and philosophy increased during my research activities. My involvement at national level enabled me to participate in new joined-up thinking addressing ageing issues especially around creative arts activities and participation.

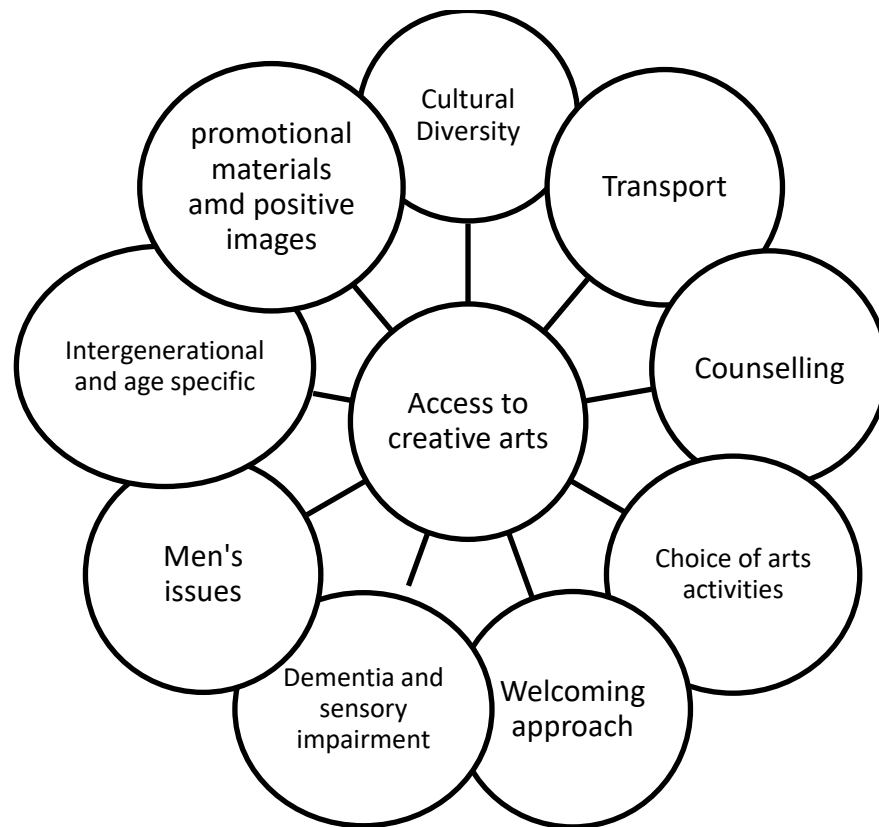
In the NDA handbook (Harding 2015), Project 18, "Call Me", reported that grassroots organisations offering meaningful, high quality activities to people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods needed resources to support them. The Older people needed to be in control. They required hands-on help from facilitators and continuing financial support to sustain them. This was my experience managing Vivacity. A welcoming, trusting approach was a strength. All participants were equally important. There was a non-judgemental environment with participants coming from different social, cultural backgrounds. To sustain the organisation, long-term support is needed. The "Dance Active" guidance (2012) suggests local commissioners should work jointly with partners to develop tailored projects in local areas so that small local organisations are well positioned for new ways of working.

Keeping people healthy and active in their communities is challenging. Dementia, cancer, cardio-vascular disease, diabetes and strokes increase with age but are less likely when people are active, eat healthily, have social relationships and lead meaningful lives (Walters 2015). NHS, Public Health Commissioners, Local Authorities, Government departments, the CAB and the Age Friendly Cities Movement are endeavouring to find ways to achieve better health and wellbeing. Inequality, expectations and behaviour need to change. People can be encouraged to take more personal responsibility if there are accessible, affordable activities available that are meaningful to them. Preventative activities that are attractive to older people encourage participation and better health.

People are attracted by different promotions. Medical clinicians and politicians think aerobic exercise classes and sports are good for the population's health. However, promoting in this way might be unattractive to many older people. The Olympics legacy, that was supposed to keep everyone active, but has not succeeded (Gibson 2015). My research shows that people become enthusiastically committed about dancing when it is meaningful, enjoyable to them and can be fitted in with their other responsibilities. Different people will prefer different dance or sports and leisure activities.

My research has shown that dance sometimes slips through the net. Dance activities for active older people are not sufficiently recognised although more research is beginning to come forward. It is not yet considered a priority within the performance dance world. However, this is changing as the Elixir Festival and Conference (2014) demonstrated, as does the growing community of older dancers and increasing different types of dance now becoming available for them.

At AAA creative arts working group (July 2014) "Access" was the topic for consideration. This is essential for older people's participation. As Chair, I encouraged participants to dialogue using their different perspectives. I incorporated everyone's ideas including ideas from my research findings to produce Figure 13.



**Figure 13** Access issues.

Different combinations are relevant for different individuals, groups, providers' intentions, targets and available resources.

Burkhardt & Rhodes (2012) guidance was developed in response to the government commitment to improve public health and wellbeing; to support the health and dance sectors to work effectively in partnership. They did not recommend specific dance styles or approaches because they hoped local commissioners would work jointly with partners developing projects for older people to meet local needs. In the UK, dancing generally has become less accessible especially as adults get older. Bartlett (2009) recounts during his youth, following fundraising events at his village cricket club, tables were pulled back and everyone of all ages danced. In many social groups dance is still an integral part of life and celebrations. For example, in my Jewish culture, everyone, regardless of age, dance horas together at weddings as well as usual social dancing. At Haringey Dance Forum meetings, young African adults expressed their surprise that dancing was not part of everyone's lives in the UK. Eliza remembered as a child, parties at her home where relatives enjoyed Scottish dancing.

Laban's principles identified "flow" in dance concerns ways we relate to others. Dancing together is different from dancing to music alone at home. This echoes concerns expressed by Putman (1995) that social capital is lost when people no longer participate in group activities. Organ (2013) suggests choice needs to be at the heart of participatory arts processes. When individuals participate in meaningful activities, they become committed, develop their capabilities and support one another. My research complements this, showing interviewees made friendships, supported one another, increased their self-awareness and confidence. All the interviewees expressed empathy and concern for others. Some were pleasantly surprised to make new friends who had a common interest at this stage of their lives. A community of older dancers is developing and there is more demand for quality dance activities including, for some, the opportunity to perform.

I am arguing that more quality dance activities could be cost effective and make a strong contribution to preventative health and wellbeing agendas. I suggest small grassroots organisations seeking grants/sponsorship should not have to reinvent the wheel proving their dance activities are beneficial. There is increasing evidence about the physical, mental health and social benefits of different dance activities. Decision/policy makers could provide financial and other support to smaller organisations, especially when they are reaching hard-to-reach communities where there is good attendance. They attract and welcome older people from diverse backgrounds.

Grant-givers and sponsors have their own criteria. Some are not interested in revenue costs, others only accept applications from registered charities (small organisations often are not charities) or have favoured categories meeting their own specific agendas. Some prefer working with larger, well-known organisations because infrastructures and evaluation frameworks are present. In future, various dance activities might become available as commissioners, look for local preventative physical, mental health and cultural activities that promote public health, arts activities and social participation. Joined-up thinking is especially important for dance activities because it is positioned within several sectors and is not as dominant as other participatory arts or sports activities.

Presently, lots of time and effort is spent by small organisations trying to secure small grants. Even if successful, grants are often for short term projects rather than sustainable provision. Volunteers or independent dance artist/facilitators often lead grassroots organisations. They inevitably will stop offering activities if sufficient funding becomes difficult to secure. I have administrative competences, feel confident completing application forms but found applying for funding time-consuming and frustrating, especially when it was uncertain whether an application, however well-written, would be successful. My determination and belief that Vivacity was important kept me motivated, especially as participants wanted it to continue. Each year funding materialised just when I was thinking all was lost. I was fortunate. Not all organisations are successful because competition is fierce and leaders might not have the necessary skills. Vivacity has flourished for over five years. I became involved in the local Dance Forum because I thought small local organisations would be stronger collaborating together, sharing information and/or applying for funding together.

My research evidence shows that some dance providers and outreach workers still consider older people's dance is synonymous with gentle exercise, graceful slow movement, walking with gestures, therapy or arm-chair exercises. All these are important for some less physically-able people. However, increasing numbers of active older people can experience more energetic, vibrant, expressive dance. There is scope for different dance styles, dynamics and qualities. Healthy older people can move, learn and be creative. The interviewees enjoyed feelings of freedom and joy that dancing brought them. As the Laban Conservatoire's literature review (2010) suggests, there needs to be more research to find out about the benefits of creative dance approaches. My research is a contribution to the growing evidence that creative/contemporary dance activities are beneficial for artistic expression and health and wellbeing.

Giles (2015), during our conversation, said Rambert was delighted with the demand for Mercury Movers' dance sessions. These sessions began soon after moving into their new South Bank building. It was part of the outreach strategy. It meets an agreement made with the social enterprise trust that owns the land where Rambert's new building is located. Giles was impressed by the energised group of older people attending Mercury Movers sessions. A second weekly

session was offered to meet demand (which I attend, enjoy and benefit from) and there are waiting lists for both. Some dancers attending Mercury Movers also attend other older people's dance activities in and around London illustrating an emerging network and community of older dancers. During sessions, those attending are fortunate to dance in professional studios, learn from experienced dance facilitators and make new friends. There have been opportunities to perform at the Sadler's Wells Elixir Festival although Mercury Movers sessions were not set up for performing. Those who wanted to perform, committed time for extra rehearsals. Some who attended weekly sessions did not want to perform whereas others were enthusiastic. Giles stated it would not be possible for Rambert or similar organisations to meet the growing demands around the country. This is similar to Sadler's Wells not wanting to franchise. (See Preface) He thought more dance activities would happen because of politicians' recent interest in "Arts for All". although he thought commissioners would have to recognise the importance of offering arts activities to older as well as younger people. He emphasised funding influences availability of different activities. For example, Rambert offers sessions for people with dementia and Parkinson's using funding from different channels.

Although some older people are too self-conscious or have internalised negative ideas about dancing publicly, others enjoy the challenge.

Choreographer/facilitators wanting to concentrate on older people's performance have to accept that many active older dancers cannot give total commitment. They are not professional dancers dedicating their lives to dancing. Many have other responsibilities that take high priority in their lives. This limitation can be an opportunity for choreographing flexible works; performance structures based on learned sections, improvisations within frameworks, freer movement and different styles. This means performances can be adaptable.

Company A, Company B and Rambert's Mercury Movers performance rehearsal sessions offer a different dance experience. They focus on regular rehearsals with committed groups of dancers learning choreography aimed towards public performances. Learning and remembering well-choreographed sequences are often involved. This is challenging. Performances reach the level of quality

required to meet the choreographer's intentions. It is enjoyable but inevitably more demanding than "open" sessions where dancing is enjoyed as a process.

Professional dance-artists working with any group of older dancers can produce quality, worthwhile outcomes. Some performances will be appreciated by audiences, others might not. This is no different from other dance companies. Professional dance companies and their audiences vary. Some companies have large followings, others do not. Artistic merit depends on the facilitators/choreographers, dancers' capabilities, audience expectations, funding available, dance performed and what is communicated directly to those watching. If active older people's dance becomes mainstream, there will be increasing numbers of people who share this interest. They might want to watch more dance performances, so audiences could increase, and this in turn will encourage more people to dance.

The Company of Elders, Green Candle Company and a few other companies pioneered older people's dance. It is developing further as a performing arts activity. More theatres, arts venues, festivals and events locally, regionally and nationally could encourage further performances. It might become increasingly unacceptable for older people to be invisible or only perform at intergenerational events with young children, however worthwhile this might be. They are mature adults who can dance and express themselves on their own terms. Different dance performances, sometimes cohort specific, sometimes intergenerational, could become commonplace. Innovative dance could be created that will be interesting and enjoyable to perform and be seen at different performance events.

Just as in previous eras, with other dance forms, "active older people's creative dance" is rising at a particular time within a social/political context. There is now an ageing population and older people are gaining more political power. In some cultures, dance performers are revered as they age such as in Southern India, Japan. and South America. As globalisation continues, there might be more opportunities for older people to perform.

Older dancers bring different experience and embodiment to their dance performance. Inevitably, their dance is different from younger dancers' physicality.



It has strong qualities and expression, can be interesting and communicate meaningfully to audiences.

Older people's bodies dancing should not make adults and younger people feel uncomfortable. Everyone's life has a narrative which includes having an older body as we age and older people do not just want to rest (Sennett 2015). Many older people want to continue learning and are not as self-conscious as young people. They have reached a stage in life where many have confidence and do not take themselves too seriously.

The interviewees felt strongly about social issues and the human condition based upon their values, knowledge and experience acquired through their life-journeys. The interviewees showed, they were interested in current and future issues, about their families, other people and what was happening in the world. They were not interested in just reminiscing which relates with Cohen's theories that the reminiscing stage comes later in people's life-course. These aspirations could be stimuli for creating new choreography and performance pieces. Quality performances could be created with them working with their own peer cohort or intergenerational performances. They do not need "watered-down" choreography that was originally created for young highly trained physically extended bodies.

Recent conferences included in this report highlight the interest in new ways to collaborate. The Dance sector is finding a stronger voice. This interest in dance is placed across arts and culture, health and wellbeing, medical, neuroscience, education, sports and leisure sectors. In the past, it was marginalised compared with theatre, music and sports. It is popular with women and is to do with emotions, so sometimes has not been taken seriously. In the UK professional dance performance except for ballet, musicals and pantomime were not taken seriously before the 1970s and received little funding until the 1980s. However, the Community Dance Sector developed from the 1970s and TV and media has promoted dance. It is now increasingly popular. Although, there have been two dance manifestos dance is still struggling to gain the same status as other art-forms and to secure sufficient funding. Dance gained committee status at the Arts Council in 1978 (Jordan 1992). It has an increasingly important role adding to the nation's cultural life as well as providing employment. It can contribute towards

improving health and wellbeing, education of children and all adults. As my findings show, there is debate about Community Dance, whether it should remain a separate dance practice with different training. I suggest, having a stronger dance sector with different factions involved will benefit “active older people’s creative dance” so it is recognised as mainstream and normal. More demand for older people’s dance sessions provides more work for dance artist/facilitators and potentially more intergenerational activities. Dance for older people needs to be included in dance strategies if dance is to become an arts activity accessible to all. The Elixir Festival (2014), the La Terza Danza conference held in Rome (2014) and festivals around the UK indicate there is increasing interest. I would argue a sharp demarcation between professional performance as an art form and everyone else, especially older people dancing to keep fit or just for fun is detrimental to the dance sector and to older people. Such views concentrate arts’ resources to a small number of designated older people’s dance companies organised by established dance organisations or regional dance hubs. The new Arts Council funding arrangements introduced in 2014 might encourage more collaborations. Local dance organisations and independent dance-artists often do not receive much needed resources. If this continues, only a small numbers of older dance enthusiasts will gain access to quality dance provision or performance opportunities. This is a discriminatory approach because more advantaged people know how to gain access to provision and can afford to travel and pay fees. As stated, Sadler’s Wells and Rambert do not think they can offer dance sessions widely, nor wish to do so. They have their small number of outreach programmes. There is a danger older people, especially the less advantaged, will be fobbed off with repetitive conformist exercise-type classes when they might prefer and benefit from more expressive dance activities. This has implications for decision/policy makers who want older people to remain active and participate in their communities. Older people need choices and access to activities they enjoy, are meaningful, benefit them and can continue participating in over time.

Nevertheless, informal, social, fun dancing is important too. Many older people enjoy copying dance step routines to music that can be repeated; especially if led by enthusiastic instructors/facilitators. These sessions are often well-attended and if encouragement is given, there are opportunities for individual expression although everyone is doing the same sequence. Sessions benefit participants’

memory and health as long as they enjoy attending regularly, do not become bored, find the pace too hectic or sequences too physically demanding.

I want people to dance in whichever way they wish. However, I would argue participating in enjoyable creative dance activities takes older people beyond their immediate comfort zone and develops them holistically because all aspects of themselves are involved. Some exercise and fitness organisations could widen their provision to meet increasing demand for “active older people’s creative dance”. Practitioners 5-7 and I considered this when we met. They saw the potential but needed to consider the implications for their organisation.

Many older people enjoyed ballroom dancing in their youth. Tea dances are popular daytime activities especially because they are held in the daytime. Some academic papers I scoped involved ballroom dancing. When I think of ballroom dancing it is the social dance of my parents’ generation. I recognise the similarities with creative dance including physical movement to music, social interaction, responding to others and being spontaneous and adaptable. Tea dances are adapting; for example, including rock-n’-roll and other recent genres. “Strictly Come Dancing” on television has generated more interest in dance. These new developments could encourage more intergenerational social dance activities because there is growing interest in “vintage” and previous dance genres. Social dance provision could be encouraged to bring local communities together now that many people of different ages are around during the day. There could be further blurring between social dancing and other dance styles. This requires venues, music, organisers and volunteers to make such activities widely available. If it is local, accessible and a partner is not necessary, it could be popular. Such activities create positive energy within neighbourhoods, encouraging increased social participation, friendships, better health and wellbeing. People of all ages could get fitter and feel part of the community.

Cunningham (2015), a dancer/choreographer who is a disabled person, proposed that if professional dancers were only young, body-perfect, mainly white and receive similar training, the results would be boring because their bodies and life experiences would all be similar. We are now living in a post-modern age where inclusivity, individuality and equality are expected. More dance is needed

regardless of age and abilities. Older dancers are different from younger dancers and although Smith's (1997) major generational divide – young bodies alongside considerably older ones is now blurring, change is still required. On the one-hand, active older people do not just possess dignity, serenity and calm but as he says, older people do not have lissom young bodies so new references are needed. The dance aesthetic expanded during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and became more inclusive and varied and this needs to continue so the aesthetic also includes older dancers.

Smith (1977) questioned why older people cannot be just as expert as the young, suggesting it was about perception rather than ability. Lansley and Early (2011) had conversations with twelve distinguished dancers from diverse backgrounds and disciplines who continued to have long performing careers. This contributes towards challenging perceptions about who can dance. The Company of Elders included a hip-hop piece within their repertoire. This was well-received when performed at a young adults' night club. They danced in their own way as older people. All of them were older white men and women. This created an ironic, humorous, fun-loving empathetic experience for the older performers and was well-received by the young adult audience. A Black young woman who had seen the performance told me that she and her friends had been thrilled and surprised watching it.<sup>24</sup>

At the Elixir festival 2014, twenty different older people dance groups from various locations performed on the Lilian Bayliss stage to full-house audiences. A larger number of groups applied. The performances differed in style and content. It was the first festival Sadler's Wells had organised show-casing older people's dance. BIG Dance and The Capital Age Festival encouraged arts activities including older people's dance. Similar festivals and dance events will only be offered if there are organisations and managers available to organise them, dance facilitators to lead and choreograph and sufficient resources available to make them happen.

There is sufficient research and interest about enhancing wellbeing to suggest that participatory arts, hobbies and sports benefit individuals and communities. The Bridge Roundtables successfully brought people together from parts of the arts

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<sup>24</sup> A young worker at the local Tottenham arts centre mentioned this to me during a conversation

and culture sectors with those from Health and Social Care. All involved extended their networks and created innovative ideas together. Other organisations' events such as the AGE-UK London conference, the Age Friendly Cities movement, Trading Times/Age of No Retirement initiatives, Claremont "Flourishing Lives" project and the CAB are all taking forward complementary ideas. Individuals' wellbeing will be enhanced if people have purpose in their lives and are connected to others. Older people benefit from being involved in activities outside their homes. Trust and confidence are outcomes, and this enables communities to flourish (Organ 2013). As the interviewees showed, this time of life provides opportunities to participate in new activities or return to previous dreams and changing lifestyles. It can be a positive time providing one has reasonable health and some resources. The interviewees were positive about this stage of life. They had time for dancing activities, building friendships and doing things they look forward to. They are taking advantage of travelling, hobbies, enjoying grandchildren, doing voluntary work for others and some were working part-time. It can be a stage in life for developing further, enjoying life and facing new challenges. Dance, in their lives, is meaningful and enjoyable and could increasingly be regarded by policy/decision-makers as a preventative, cost effective activity with many benefits.

Dancing gives a sense of freedom and is life enhancing especially if one is experiencing it for the first time or returning to it after many years. The interviewees were optimistic, thoughtful, and sensible. They had self-awareness and wanted to continue adapting. They were optimistic, having a sense of purpose and meaning in their lives. My first impressions when analysing their transcripts were how optimistic, unselfish, reasonable and open-minded they were. This was a random group of active older people from different backgrounds living in different locations. Their only common criteria were participating in creative dance sessions and having conversations with me. They expressed their experience, wellbeing, self-awareness, being "alive" in the moment, moving in space. dancing with others and empathising with them and solving tasks together.

None of the interviewees were greedy, competitive or made negative judgements about others. Active older people's dance is concerned with expression, enjoyment, co-operation and doing the best within one's own and the group's

capabilities. Facilitators and organisers can encourage a culture of fairness, humour and humaneness where open-mindedness, empathy and confident self-awareness can develop. I am aware it would be wrong to assume from the interviewees' responses that sweeping generalisations can be made. It is unlikely that attending weekly dance sessions changes people's beliefs and behaviour and makes them more empathetic towards others. There must be people who attend older people's dance sessions who are selfish, egocentric and reactionary. However, this was not my experience when dancing with older dancers. The interviewees' answers to my magic wand questions were testimony to their open, empathetic attitudes and demonstrated their positive social and emotional wellbeing. My findings suggest that active older people live in the present and are concerned about current issues including difficulties that younger people face, and they dream for a better world. I am sure many other older people have similar concerns and aspirations although they are not participating in dance activities. However, dancing encourages self-awareness, moving in space with others and respect. This provides opportunities for developing friendships. It encourages creativity and finding alternative solutions. It might be that participating in creative dance enables older people to become more adaptable, think creatively with others, consider alternatives and these skills can be used in other aspects of their lives so they continue to develop and face change. This is being explored in neuroscience research (Brown & Parsons 2008).

They recognise their own physical limitations and so can empathise with others' limitations. They recognise their developing capabilities. My positive, optimistic attitudes (influenced by my values, beliefs and creative dance being part of my life) did not intentionally influence the interviewees. Their "wishes" were their own. There were no disparities between those from London or the South West or people from different social, cultural or economic backgrounds. Their aspirations were for a better world. Some suggested political intervention whilst others were influenced by their religious traditions. Everyone expressed themselves with sincerity. They recognised older people needed to be part of society and resources were required to keep them healthy and socially engaged. Active older people's creative dance, if it becomes mainstream and commonplace will challenge perceptions about older people's capabilities and what can be achieved.

Dance is a life-enhancing activity, enabling participants to express ranges of emotion, benefitting their bodies, mind and encouraging spirituality. Some interviewees described dance as freeing them and some were searching for joy through dance.

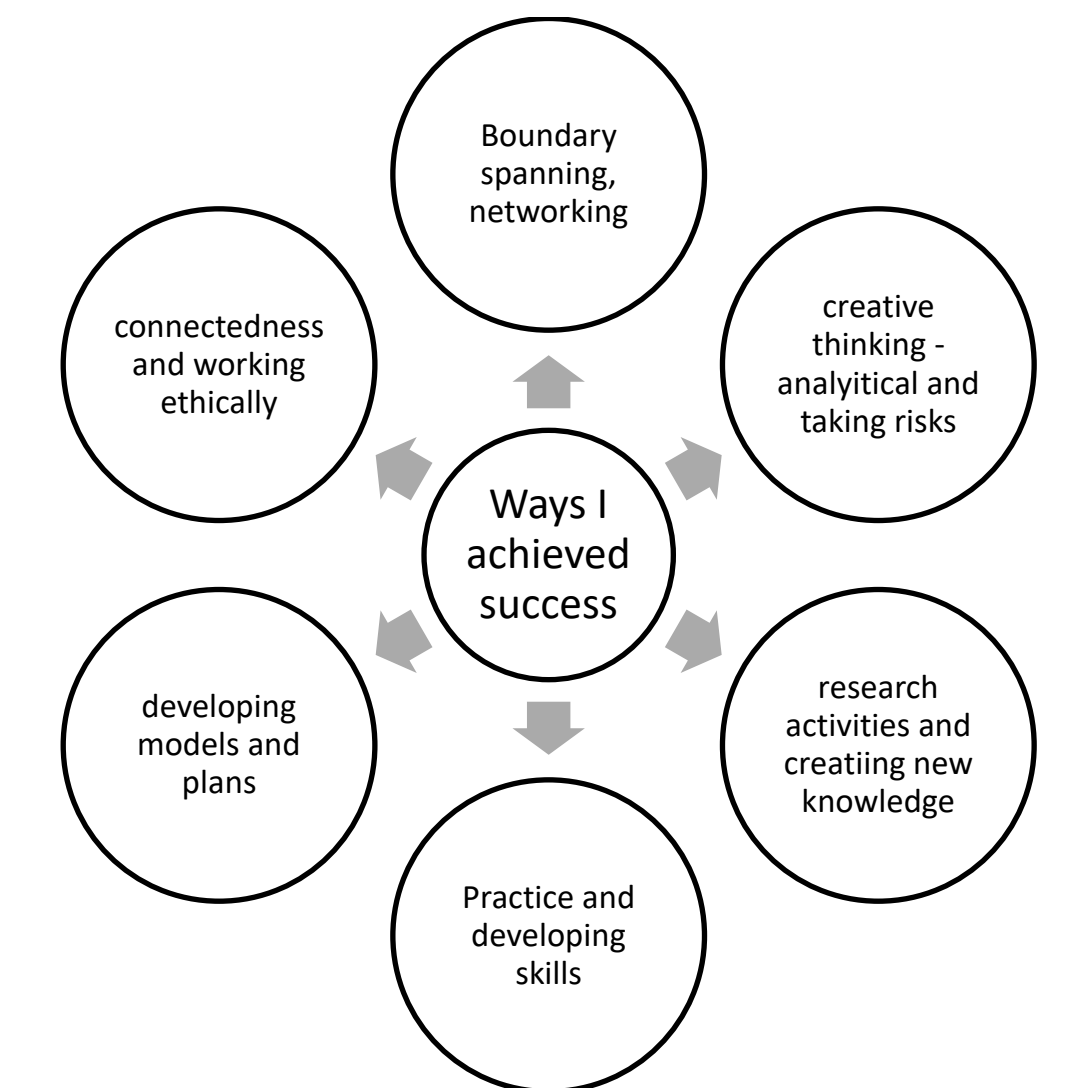
As Margolda (2009) suggests. I brought my internalised ideas and thoughts forward which co-ordinated with others' ideas and activities. This enabled me to analyse the interviews and produce the findings in Chapter 5. The recommendations below grew out of all the theories, information and experiences I had amassed that were critically analysed and evaluated and then taken forward further in this discussion. Drafting was a gradual, sustained process but I built trust and confidence in my own ideas and work. I became less self-deprecating and more confident in myself as a researcher and person who had knowledge and understanding about "active older people participating in creative dance". I accepted some people had differing views from me, recognising I had knowledge to communicate and share. I had reached my own understanding. I found I had awareness about broader issues than others who had specialist expertise; for example, that many active older people do not consider themselves to be "elders" or want "gentle exercise".

I had been confident during my fulltime career, but during my dancing-journey I was on a sharp learning curve entering new work environments and meeting people who were knowledgeable in their own fields. My confidence as a researcher took time to develop and consolidate. However, during the final phase I became more authoritative, more aware about what I did not know and what I had learned and experienced. Others, including dance provider/practitioners and some policy/decision-makers wanted to share ideas with me, collaborate and learn about my research.

I recognised there was a wide range of individual experience as well as similarities between cases in the interviews and this acted as a form of triangulation. e.g. Eliza's and Toni's caring responsibilities whilst holding down jobs and Jean and Maria, (who were older) being housewives after marriage.

Throughout my research I was professional. A solid structure could be built. (Dikerdem October 2014 DProf seminar). This approach guided me when organising the themes and data so the findings and discussion could emerge from my successful achievements which included:

- Researching why other older people wanted to dance and some perform
- Increasing my knowledge through desk-top research
- Founding/managing Vivacity as a successful grassroots organisation
- Giving a successful TEDxTottenham presentation
- Dancing in two dance performances at the Elixir festival
- Having conversations with some leader/providers and practitioners in the dance world
- Being involved in various boundary spanning activities
- Giving support and advice to others and learning from them.



**Figure 14** Ways I had achieved success.



Producing the Figure 14 model enabled me to gain further confidence and inspiration. This led to the following recommendations being created flowing naturally from all the data, analysis and interpretation from the three aspects of enquiry in my case study.

Eventually,

*“This jigsaw puzzle could only be fully appreciated for its doctorateness when all the components were present and fitted together”.*

(Coughlan 2015 at Institute of Work Based Learning seminar citing Trafford and Leshem 2008).

## 6.2 Recommendations

The following ten recommendations link directly to the main question:

**Why do active older people choose to participate in creative dance and are there implications and benefits?**

and the topics can be identified from the six templates and Figure 10

- Active older people
- Dance
- Community-national, international (participating)
- Challenging perceptions
- Work based and personal
- Connectedness, spirituality, creativity

The recommendations also relate back to the report's aims and objectives and emerge directly from my research frameworks, tools and questions.

### **1. Continue to actively challenge ageism.**

Ageism affects everyone and is now actively being challenged. New perceptions and attitudes about the second half of life are needed. Positive, realistic terminology and images are required so individuals' aspirations, capabilities as well as their needs and limitations are acknowledged. Inequalities and power relations need to be addressed so that younger and older people can be hopeful and realistic about their future lives. Ageism, as a 21<sup>st</sup> century taboo must continue to be challenged.

### **2. As other cohorts, active older people should be respected as individuals with preferences, different life-styles, responsibilities and needs.**

Older people are not a single cohort. Everyone should be part of society and not be marginalised or isolated and many contribute to society. Each person has their own narrative, history and aspirations. Large scale and small scale research need

to take into account the experiences and knowledge of older people and not treat them as a single group.

**3. “Active older people’s creative dance” should become a mainstream dance activity.** All kinds of dance need to be encouraged. It should be commonplace for different dance activities to be accessible, affordable and safe. Provision needs to be offered across the UK. Creative dance as described in this research benefits the whole person. It is enjoyable, encourages artistic expression, creativity and dancing with others, as well as being a physical activity. It can be a choice for active older people. More dance facilitators will require training and career development. This includes leadership and facilitation skills, awareness of their own internalised stereotyping and limiting assumptions concerning the ageing body and active older people’s dance capabilities. Dance sessions should be welcoming, where creative activities are encouraged, participants feel secure, relaxed and respected and can use their energy, emotions and ideas in different ways. Older dancers can develop their dancing capabilities over time if there are opportunities to attend sessions regularly.

**4. Dance should be taken seriously by decision/policy-makers and strategic planners because it can contribute to arts and culture, health and wellbeing in later life.** Dance is life enhancing, benefits individuals and society and should be available for children and adults throughout their lives. It can be a cost-effective way of keeping people active, healthy and participating in their communities especially as it enables people to pursue a common interest, develop friendships and increase understanding between people from different backgrounds.

**5. Different sections of the dance world should continue collaborating and working to develop a stronger voice,** so dance is taken seriously within the cultural life of the nation and communities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This involves more joined-up thinking and blurring of previous demarcations; boundary spanning with colleagues between different factions within the dance world and with people from other sectors and different organisations such as health, sports and leisure and arts and culture. This requires trust, goodwill, new ways of communicating, resources and support; changing attitudes and breaking down unnecessary barriers.

## **6. More age-friendly environments need to be created.**

More age friendly physical, social and cultural environments need to be created. Planners, policy/decision-makers, artists and others can provide all ages with safe, accessible environments where they can participate in the life of their communities/neighbourhoods. The Age Friendly City Movement encourages inclusive cultures and respect for different life-styles. Unnecessary barriers such as age limits, lack of provision or ageist attitudes prevent older people getting involved. Accessible venues and spaces, transport and affordable activities need to be available for this to happen. My research has shown that “active older people’s creative dance” can contribute whether age/peer specific or intergenerational. The same applies for other participatory arts, sports and leisure activities. Working and volunteering activities are important for some older people as well. Local authorities, other policy-makers and funders need to recognise the importance of community spaces and cultural facilities and support community and voluntary groups working with older people providing cultural and arts activities so that they can continue to find innovative ways of bringing people purposefully together at this time of rapid change and less resources.

## **7. Independent dance-artists and grassroots organisations offering dance need support and recognition including access to funding and other resources.**

Dance activities should be incorporated into overall neighbourhood, regional and national development strategic plans for culture and leisure, health and wellbeing, regeneration and age friendly environments. Collaborations for mutual benefit should be encouraged, including ways larger organisations can cascade information and resources down to smaller organisations. Small, independent dance organisations and independent dance-artists might benefit from working in collaboration with other arts organisations and community centres, especially when applying for funding so they become sustainable

## **8. Boundary spanning skills and joined-up thinking benefit different organisations to meet 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges, so they work together to find new solutions.**

More training and practical experience is required for those working in large and small organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors. This includes arts and community organisations. Representatives from various, different organisations need to communicate and dialogue with others to

find new ways of problem solving, learning and sharing ideas. Trust, respect, encouragement, support and diversity of ideas are needed. Different perspectives and ideas need to be recognised and can exist together rather than there being a right or wrong way. This will encourage more innovation, transdisciplinarity and new solutions.

**9. Dance should continue to be promoted, encouraged and available to all who wish to participate. Older people's dance and performance can contribute towards challenging perceptions.** Dance challenges perceptions and stereotypes that everyone in society has internalised or have seen in the media. This has changed during the dancing-journey as more older people leading normal lives are being seen in film and television. There have been more opportunities for older people to dance publicly as my research has shown. "Active older people's creative dance" is a way to challenge ageism and decline. All bodies age and move differently during the life-course. Older people's bodies do not have to be invisible. They can be expressive, interesting and artistic. My research has shown younger people were inspired by older people's creative dance; it gives them hope for their futures. Intergenerational activities can be mutually beneficial, promoting understanding, friendships and social cohesion and many older people enjoy participating in these activities. However, when older people want to develop their dance capabilities many will prefer dancing regularly in their own sessions rather than with younger adults, in intergenerational projects or in sessions for vulnerable people. There need to be choices and a wide range of dance activities available. If older people are seen actively involved in their communities, this also challenges perceptions of them because they are not invisible or marginalised.

**10. Dance encourages connectedness and spirituality in its widest sense; bringing people together.** Policy/decision makers should recognise dance as contributing to society; giving feelings of joy, freedom, friendship empathy and providing opportunities for better health, wellbeing and cultural activities. Different dance activities can bring meaning and purpose to people's lives, encouraging social participation and audiences. Dance keeps children and adults of all ages active and engaged. Dance is an art form and a good social and economic investment contributing to creating a better world.

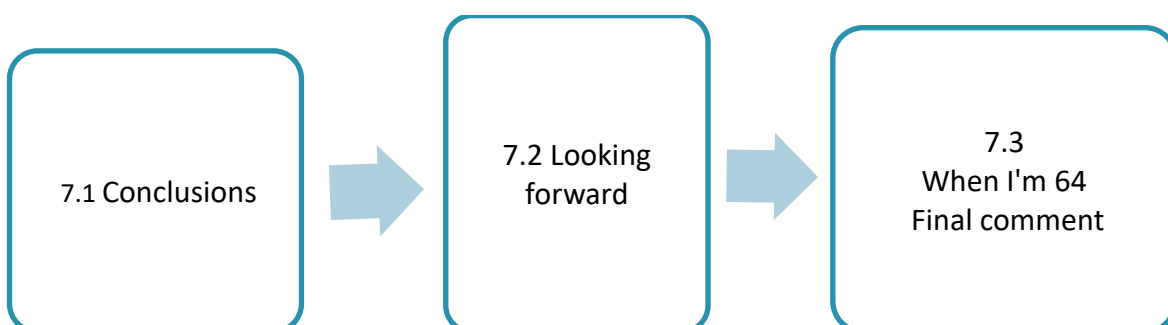
My case study design gave me the creative freedom to see themes and sub-themes and work activities from different perspectives which differed from others. As mentioned, it was impossible to include all synthesised topics in the recommendations, so I chose those I considered to be most relevant. However, interpretations were not lost because they influenced the conclusions and looking forward in Chapter 7.

## Chapter 7 Conclusions and looking forward

My dancing-journey is now coming to a conclusion. My research has been timely. I could not have predicted at the beginning what my dancing-journey would include or that social and political implications would become increasingly important and relevant to my research. This report has captured issues and understandings about active older people participating in creative dance and ways perceptions about them are being challenged. It has explored and contributed towards boundary spanning activities and new collaborative ways of working. I was within the research and have made every effort to be open and transparent, making my assumptions and biases clear to make this report understandable, honest and trustworthy.

My research project was a huge undertaking and learning opportunity. I am now more authoritative and I have already made contributions as shown in the project activities and I hope this report will continue to make contributions in the future. During the project I lived through local social unrest and its aftermath; there has been increasing demand by older people to dance and increasing opportunities for them to do so including more creative dance sessions and performance opportunities and other dance activities. I have founded and managed a thriving local creative dance organisation and performed in some leading older people's dance festivals.

In this final chapter there are conclusions followed by ideas that can be taken forward in the future and an iterative pathway back to preface and comments about "When I'm 64".



## 7.1 Conclusions

My research has incorporated my professional skills, knowledge, interests and life experience with new evolving work activities over the last five years. It grew from personal aspirations, my own passion to dance and enabling others to dance and for them to have choices in their lives. What started as a personal challenge and narrative including involving other active older people who were choosing to dance and giving them voice, adapted over time to incorporate new work-based activities, desktop research and live evidence. It was an exploratory case study, a “window”, during uncertain political/financial and social times as well as a transition in my own life. My practice and developing ideas triangulated with and/or complemented activities becoming realities around the UK and internationally. It fitted with others’ academic theories and ideas (Murray 2011).

During my dancing-journey there was increasing recognition about changes in demography and longevity. There has been increasing recognition that active older people should not be marginalised just because they reach a certain chronological age. My research is a contribution showing many will increasingly remain in paid employment or work part-time, volunteer or have caring responsibilities for grandchildren, older parents, relatives and neighbours. This enables the younger generation to work and for society to benefit financially. Older people’s skills and knowledge benefit communities and they can pass on expertise and experience to next generations. They are not “retired” and should not be invisible and marginalised. Many are active, productive and experienced adults with energy. They wish to contribute and participate with others and remain part of their local communities. Cohen’s paradigm on developmental stages in the second half of life show older people can experience positive ageing and this will alter ways they are perceived.

There is more recognition of “active older people’s creative dance”. Gradually old perceptions are being challenged. I found myself on the crest of a wave of this new social phenomenon which potentially is becoming a mainstream activity. This report has shown that dance easily slips through nets. I found policy/decision makers, academic researchers and planners often do not perceive older people’s dance as an expressive, life-enhancing activity that benefits the whole person as



well as an art form that communicates to others. However, this is beginning to change.

Dance encourages social participation, health and wellbeing, coping with medical and chronic health issues including fall prevention and dementia. It is popular especially for older women. More older people will be dancing if they have opportunities and dance is accessible to them. This will be for its own sake as an expressive meaningful activity as well as a preventative health activity for wellbeing, friendship and enjoyment. I argued that “active older people’s creative dance” has a contribution to make locally and nationally and increasing numbers of active older people want to dance<sup>25</sup>.

The dance sector is beginning to make increased efforts to relate to other work sectors and dance is gaining a stronger profile. Simultaneously, there have been financial cuts and less resources available. Policy/decision-makers have to make hard decisions especially as there are growing demands on public services such as care and health for an ageing population. “The World Report on Ageing and Health” (WHO 2015) stresses governments need policies to enable older people to continue participating in society and avoid reinforcing inequalities that underpin older people’s poor health and it rejects theories concerning excessive demands on society by frail, dependent ageing populations. Older people’s contributions to families, communities and societies outweigh any investments to provide health and care services for those requiring them. Sinclair (2015) reported similar findings. These reports, issued in 2015, indicate my research explorations were aligned with others’ research.

When I left fulltime work, I had no idea I would dance on some well-known theatre stages to enthusiastic audiences or make friendships with increasing numbers of older people who wanted to dance. I was unaware I would become involved with a DWP national network and chair one of its working groups or become part of a local Dance Forum and share ideas with young artists. Over the last five years, I participated in different boundary spanning, advising and presenting activities.

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<sup>25</sup> An indication of this are the increasing numbers of older people’s dance groups from around the UK who have contacted Sadlers Wells to be involved in future Elixir festivals and workshops.

Vivacity has reached its sixth year as a thriving, welcoming local dance organisation enabling older people to dance and share good practice with others making links with local dance organisations, community groups and health professional commissioners. This boundary spanning is continuing and is important for tackling regeneration issues and finding solutions in the future.

How life is lived by many active older people nowadays is different from the past. I have argued negative perceptions still prevail in society and some are internalised by everyone including many older people. Perceptions must change. Not all older people have the Beatles' mindset sung in "When I'm 64". Not all are vulnerable, frail or choose passive lifestyles. However, as this report has shown this is how over 60s are still perceived by some health professionals, policy/decision makers and dance practitioners.

Remaining active and adaptable requires being creative and facing the unknown challenges in life, prioritising activities and taking on responsibilities and facing life's uncertainties. Creative dance can develop these skills. Thinking creatively and flexibly can contribute to keep the mind/body/spirit active and healthy. Society has a responsibility to care for those in need and not ignore, neglect or patronise them. As Cohen made clear, a realistic view of old age is needed and sufficient resources are needed for those who are vulnerable and/or frail.

Older people's knowledge, experience, responsibilities and opinions need to be taken seriously especially as they contribute within their families, communities and workplaces. In just the same way, younger people have much to offer older people, including their fresh worldviews, their skills and energy. Younger and older people can inspire and positively benefit each other, especially if they share common interests and do not have negative stereotypes about each other. Different generations can respect one another and share ideas. More needs to happen so families, social groups, neighbourhoods and communities can thrive and negative perceptions challenged. My research has shown that dance activities can contribute to creating new perceptions of older people and intergenerational activities can be enjoyable and inclusive. However, I have argued strongly that people at a similar stage in their life-course with similar physicality may prefer

dancing together regularly to develop their capabilities in ways that are acceptable to them.

As Gullette argues, ageism is the 21<sup>st</sup> century taboo that needs challenging. This report is a contribution showing this is starting to happen. Active older people are challenging the perceptions of what it means to be older in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Decision/policy makers are realising they need to consult older people about issues and provision that affect them. Individuals will benefit if they gain knowledge and skills; remain independent and lead healthier lives. We are social beings and friendships and connectedness are important. Dance activities when accessible enable individuals to be culturally involved and healthier. Society and communities benefit and resources can be used more effectively.

## 7.2 Looking forward

My DProf journey began as a personal decision to participate in higher-level learning as I entered new activities during the next phase of my career. My dancing-journey covered a wide range of specific, related and transdisciplinary topics. I was a reflective practitioner learning, influencing, informing others whilst collaborating and learning from them. I shared insights when attending committees and seminars. My credibility increased as I engaged at strategic and management levels using skills and experience from my previous careers, new work experience managing Vivacity and from being an older dancer and older person. My research benefitted from these experiences. I had increased self-awareness and determination to explore and learn more. I influenced others and they influenced me. My aims included informing and influencing decision/policy makers, dance providers/practitioners and to arouse interest and understanding. Some of my ideas/work activities were achieved or are becoming realities. Some themes may be generalisable so can contribute to a range of national and/or local activities and be taken forward by others. The following topics are examples that might lend themselves to large-scale collaborative or specific small-scale research activities and/or work activities in the future.

- Ways to promote and encourage the second stage of life to provide opportunities for developing potential, accepting responsibilities and being realistic about health, finances and social life. New acceptable terminology, concepts and language to replace using chronological age and negative terminology. Further research into ways active older people lead their day-to-day lives – the stereotypes of the song “When I’m 64” are no longer a reality for many people.
- Ways to rollout accessible dance activities and different types of sessions so there are choices. New ways of developing “active older people’s creative dance” as a mainstream dance activity so that older dancers develop their capabilities including more performing. Different career development for potential and experienced dance facilitators.

- Further research and training on developing welcoming environments where participants feel at ease, can contribute and be actively involved, on their own terms regardless of their backgrounds. New management training and support for working with older people for small grassroots organisations and independent dance facilitators so they develop skills and can access resources to sustain their organisations.
- Different ways music and multi-media arts can motivate and stimulate active older people's dance expression and interpretation as mature, capable performers.
- Ways dance encourages learning, flexible cognitive thought patterns and creativity, encouraging people to face the unknown as they age and lead better lives with increased health and wellbeing. Neuroscience and increasing knowledge about the plasticity of the brain.
- Ways to encourage boundary-spanning, networking and collaborating so new ways are found to work with uncertainties and limited resources, so more activities become accessible in communities including dance activities.
- Exploring ways confidence, empathy, friendship and self-esteem can be encouraged through participating in cultural arts, sports and leisure activities including dance and ways these benefit individuals and communities.

The list above gives examples springing from my research. There are more possibilities for different themes that can interweave.

My dancing-journey research was completed during February 2016<sup>26</sup>, a new year with uncertainties, but also a time for some optimism concerning older people and "active older people's creative dance". There was growing awareness about ageing populations and longevity. This is only slowly being recognised and

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<sup>26</sup> This was prior to the EU referendum campaign and debates or Brexit. My work activities, dancing, and writing up my report continued.

addressed as a priority. There is recognition that older people benefit when they participate actively in their neighbourhoods. There is growing awareness that people of all ages need encouragement to participate; activities need to be accessible, meaningful and attractive to them. Over the last six years, I led and/or participated in some new activities and my research has critically reflected on them. I intend to continue to be involved.

Locally, in Tottenham, more arts activities will enable the diverse population to come together across generations and social divides. I also intend to continue participating in the AAA/Flourishing Lives London group that is transforming into a new networking and training organisation concentrating on older people and creative arts.

I will continue attending dance sessions, developing my dance capabilities, performing and enjoying an activity I am passionate about which gives meaning to my life and where I have many new friends. I hope to be part of the growing community of older dancers in London and beyond for as long as I can dance.

Vivacity's grant continues until summer 2016. It is essential that ways are found so that it can continue in the future because it has experience to share with others and participants want it to continue.

Sadler's Wells has taken forward the Elixir Festival and conferences and the next one is planned for 2017. Organisers recognised there is growing demand for older people's dance performances. Sadler's Wells have started offering performance workshops for older dancers. Rambert and The Place are extending their provision for active older people's dance and offering more sessions<sup>27</sup> and RAD hope to roll-out "Silver Swans" following their successful pilot to provide more older people dance sessions and training for dance facilitators wanting career development to provide older people's dance.

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<sup>27</sup> In March 2016 I was invited to be a member of the Place "Audience Club" which is part of an EU project researching new relationships between audiences and dance performance. I am one of the few older people in the club of 35 people. This is an interesting, innovative project.

I intend to continue promoting dance for all. I am well-positioned to present my research and work experience to others who are interested, especially about active older people's creative dance and realistic perceptions of active older people, positive aspects of ageing and giving people choices to meet their aspirations. There is life after fulltime work! My research and work experience can make a positive, thought-provoking contribution.

It is uncertain, in the present financial climate, what will happen long-term in the UK, concerning the ageing population and whether there will be increased age specific and intergenerational arts activities or less provision. Positive signs include the second Elixir dance festival and the increasing numbers of arts events now happening in Tottenham as part of regeneration activities. However, there are negative signs of cuts in funding for voluntary organisations, NHS, and local authorities provision. The government is encouraging increasing numbers of older people to remain active and independent in their communities and to continue working, volunteering and caring for others. At the same time, there is increased unemployment in parts of the country and less support in the community for social care. Older people will benefit if they are adaptable, stay healthy, positive and have interests but it is easier for some and more difficult for the disadvantaged or those who have complex health or social problems. More innovative ideas and resources are required for older people, especially the less advantaged, to lead purposeful lives with care and support when needed. Political and social decisions will be needed so that preventative activities that are enjoyable and meaningful, encourage people to be independent and healthy. These, if considered with common-sense and imagination as well as direct financial considerations, could in the future be regarded as cost-effective with long-term benefits for individuals and society.

My research has recommended the dance world needs to continue developing a stronger voice. In December 2015, a new industry body was launched called One Dance UK with a second launch in April 2016. This new organisation has dance performance as its focus, but active older people's dance was not included as a priority, so maintaining the same position it had at its "New Ideas and New Inspirations" conference in 2015. If it widens its priorities, collaborates and networks with other sectors interested in dance it might expand its boundaries and

influence others. More joined-up thinking could take place involving Culture and Arts, Health and Wellbeing; Sports and Leisure sectors. It is not in the interest of the dance world to remain fragmented within itself or fall through the net when arts and sports activities are researched and policies are being made. If it has a stronger voice with more joint working, the profile of dance will rise. This could provide more work for dance-artists, teachers and instructors and create more interest and audiences for dance performances. The dance industry will benefit, giving it a stronger position to gain funding, resources and promote itself widely so arousing more interest and placing dance as a popular, important cultural arts activity as well as benefiting health and wellbeing. If this happens, active older people's dance activities including creative dance performance will become a mainstream activity and dance generally will be more integrated into children's and adults' lives. This will encourage older adults to be seen, participating and not marginalised. It is taking time for the dance world including Community Dance to recognise that dance is not only for the young, marginalised, vulnerable and frail. Dance is not just young professional performers or older amateurs wanting exercise and fun. I suggest it is a good sign that Community Dance Foundation has a new name "People Dancing" and is adapting to new social and political challenges and new ways different forms of dance and other arts can be brought together in new ways. Dance has reached a new stage of development and is questioning practice, achievements, who is involved and ways to go forward so that dance is for everyone. There are active older people who want to dance for its own sake and do not think of themselves as vulnerable, frail and old. There are tensions in the dance world that need addressing, such as what kinds of dance to offer the increasing numbers of active older people. There could be new categories involving types of dance styles and genres, and more opportunities for performing as older dancers (whether ageing professionals or non-professional).

Adults often enjoy watching younger people dancing but they want to dance too! Dance television programmes are increasingly popularising dance across generations. Cultural arts; sports and leisure and health sectors can promote and encourage dance activities providing there are facilitators and venues available. Boundaries are blurring, and different dance factions and dance genres can influence one another. Potentially, more younger and older people could dance, become audiences, consumers and customers.



If older people's dance activities are accessible, targeted and promoted well, there will be increased demand. Hazel's sessions in SW city and Vivacity and groups elsewhere show that older people will participate in creative/contemporary dance regularly if sessions are accessible, interesting and enjoyable.

Technology and social media influence our lives. We are now entering a new era where new ways of thinking, feeling and empathising are developing that might be positive or negative. New challenges face society, at local, national and global levels. Everyone is having to adapt. It will benefit older people if they make decisions to remain active and participate if they can.

As in the past, dance could be integrated into children's and all adults' lives, for expression, celebration, communication and enjoyment as well as for exercise. This would enhance creativity and encourage social and emotional wellbeing, building positive relationships and creating better health and wellbeing. Everyone has to remain hopeful that sufficient resources will become available and everyone who wishes to dance will be able to do so. This benefits them individually, their neighbourhoods and society. My report ends with sceptical awareness that inequality persists, resources are limited and social and political contexts continue to be uncertain. As Ledwith suggests we are living through unprecedented change in history. Each individual's dignity as a human being must be recognised and respected. The world needs leaders with imagination and a positive sense of humanity. All positive thinking, feeling human beings, can, as Sachs stated,

*“have hope and be peacemakers and must not lose heart”.*

(Reith lecture 2007)

Dance activities including “active older people's creative dance” can encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to be more aware of themselves and others. It enables them to recognise their strengths, limitations and develop empathy for others.

As an active older person, I participated in this work-based dancing-journey trying to lead a purposeful, meaningful life that enables others to benefit as well as

having an enjoyable time myself. Others are doing this in different ways around the UK and beyond. I hope this report inspires and complements others' work and encourage positive attitudes towards dance activities, especially "active older people's creative dance" and ways we connect and relate to others as human beings. If more people become involved, we can enhance our lives and contribute towards a better future for those generations following us.

***More Dance! Towards peace and a better world!***

***"It is music and dancing that make me at peace with the world."***

Nelson Mandela

### 7.3 When I'm 64 - final comment

This report began with "When I'm 64!"

Whilst finalising the report, I found Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General's opening speech, made to the Second World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid, 2002. It ended

*".... Finally, ... I turned 64 years old today. I therefore feel empowered to quote the Beatles' song and ask, on behalf of all older persons:*

*Will you still need me; will you still feed me, when I'm 64?*

*I trust the answer is yes, older people will be provided for, and yes, older people will be needed, in the twenty-first century".*

This is a fitting way to conclude my report and dancing-journey.

## **Chapter 8 Final reflections**

### **8.1 Reflection on my learning and professional development.**

When I began the DProf programme, I was in awe of academia but during the dancing-journey I became more realistic. I was on a sharp learning curve, initially lacking the knowledge and confidence to work out what I was supposed to be doing. My confidence increased as I learned more. I spent time learning about research methodology, determined to carry out transparent work-based research that had firm structures and boundaries to underpin my outcomes.

My research adapted to cope with the uncertainties and idiosyncrasies of my work activities. I included critical reflection explicitly throughout my research report but I did not want my report to be only about my own development. I wanted to contribute in some way, by researching my work activities, including boundary spanning, with representatives from different work sectors and organisations considering ageing, older people and arts activities including dance. I learned about these areas of knowledge and practice as I participated in activities, sharing my skills and expertise. Those I collaborated with appreciated the way I worked with them. I wanted to make things happen.

The semi-structured conversational interviews I had with other active older people who were dancing were important for my research. I had access to peers who were dancing and used my coaching expertise to interview them, enabling me to collect rich data that enlivened and informed this report. Their ideas and stories were heartfelt and gave rich insights into personal experiences, meanings and feelings. These interviews produced rich data, which later I analysed and interpreted using NVivo 10 synthesising topics that emerged with other evidence I had amassed. I felt a real achievement; I mastered the software sufficiently for it to be a positive, useful tool enabling me to analyse the interviews extensively so that the contents of the interviews could be successfully incorporated into my research findings and recommendations interweaving with the other aspects of the case study.

Multidisciplinary topics included ageing, dance, participating and promoting positive images of older people, connectedness and joy, community development at local and national levels. I wove around them bringing coherence and recognising boundaries and decided their relevance for answering my research questions and meet the goals for my research.

As I became more knowledgeable, I became increasingly aware how much more there was to learn and research. This ironic self-awareness is part of higher learning. I felt more authoritative but at the same time want to learn more. It was fortunate I learned about transdisciplinarity. This approach differs from analytical research where hypotheses are used to prove or disprove theories where knowledge concentrates on building upon ever-increasing specialised and fragmented topics within academic disciplines. There is so much knowledge available at the click of a computer button with access to leading academics through the internet. How different from studying where the only sources of knowledge were silent libraries, face-to-face study with experts or folklore.

I was gaining further understanding and wanted to contribute this and had to select and pull together what I considered relevant. Transdisciplinarity enabled my research to progress incorporating the reflexivity of my work and other research activities.

Gradually, my research report came together in an original, interesting way. It reflected what I had done and the processes involved, underpinned by sound methodological approaches and desk-top research. The recommendations and ways to look forward flowed coherently from my findings, the social/political context and the aims, objectives and goals of my research.

Towards the end of the project, my ideas increasingly became realities. "Active older people's creative dance" was emerging and developing as a mainstream dance activity although it still needs further recognition, financial support, promotion and more trained facilitators if it is going to be widely accessible. Older people's dance blurred with concerns about ageing professional dance performers and health and wellbeing issues. My work activities intertwined with others' theories and work. Often, dance (of all kinds) is still not prioritised or considered as

an important topic, although it is a life-enhancing activity with many benefits. That is a strong message from my research.

My own voice and confidence strengthened as an older dancer, older learner, a boundary spanner and a researcher. Carrying out my DProf dancing-journey was worthwhile although sometimes difficult and demanding. I was adaptable, open to ideas and brought my research to life, incorporating knowledge from desktop research, the voices of other active older dancers, metaphors, illustrations and my work practice. I was analytical and creative, experimenting with ways to communicate effectively.

This was the largest piece of research and written work I had ever done. Most of the time I was writing and studying alone and this was difficult for me as I am a “people-person” who enjoys relating to others sharing, arguing and analysing face-to-face with others. However, I enjoyed successfully interviewing other older dancers and having conversations with leading practitioners/decision-makers. I also found being totally absorbed learning through texts and reports and analysing and interpreting all the data and evidence satisfying and enjoyable. I wanted to make an innovative contribution that could complement large-scale quantitative and other qualitative research.

I am about to enter the final stage of my professional career. I wish to concentrate on advising, communicating, supporting, mentoring and collaborating with others to encourage more choices and access to arts activities. I am delighted that my local neighbourhood has benefitted from the community activities I initiated and/or led over the years, including Chestnuts Arts Centre, Tottenham Community Choir and Vivacity. I hope I can continue contributing to my local community in the future and share my expertise more widely. I now have learned that my greatest practical skills are not being a specialist but being a person who can interview different people and get them to express their ideas and feelings and boundary span to enable people to work together and I can influence and support others in trusting, respectful relationships. My DProf journey has ended by recognising that enabling, leading, liaising and networking and my passion for dancing are my main professional contributions.

It has been a transforming dancing-journey. I successfully took previous knowledge and work practice in new directions that I could not have imagined when I began. I made opportunities to learn about interesting, relevant topics in greater depth. I stayed on track even through there were curved pathways and the journey took longer than expected. I remained calm and determined and my inner-self never doubted that I had something to contribute and something important to say. There were “halts and blocks” along the way when I thought I could not continue. I successfully achieved work activities and appreciated my positive work collaborations and new friendships. In March 2016, I was editing and honing my report; my dancing-journey was slowing down; the end was in sight. I entered a new role with new responsibilities. Like so many other active older people, I became a grandparent for the first time.

This wonderful new experience with the completion of my research report ends my dancing-journey with heightened joy, new aspirations and hope for the future. I will continue to “see what life brings” and hope to disseminate my new knowledge, continue dancing and prioritising competing priorities and share my passion and enthusiasm. I want to use my skills, expertise and time to best effect. There will be new priorities between family, work, travelling, interests and volunteering. This reflects what my DProf report has researched, what I learned and gained. I benefitted from participating in doctoral higher learning and carrying out work-based research. I feel confident I can share my research report with others, accepting they may have different views from mine. I was open and transparent and my research communicates in ways that can be useful. I will continue the final stage of my professional journey, boundary spanning, networking, learning and dancing for as long as I can. I recognise there are global and national issues affecting the future and some of them are negative. The only hope is that everyone of goodwill can lead positive meaningful lives for themselves, their families, communities and for future generations.

## **8.2 Reflection on my methodological contribution in dealing with complexity**

This section gives a reflection on my methodological contribution in dealing with complexity. I designed methodological approaches that enabled me to carry out work-based research, taking full advantage of being involved in an emerging social phenomenon. I incorporated what was happening during a five-year period and a new personal stage of my life.

The design supported me to use evidence and data effectively and share with readers in transparent ways, my thoughts and feelings underpinning my research activities and final written report. It was important to me to research in ethical ways, be robust, credible and build good relationships with others I worked or danced with and I appreciated their interest, encouragement and support. My research was incorporated into my life and challenges I faced. My work activities were ad-hoc, insecure and not easily incorporated into my research at the beginning. I wanted to participate in work-based research rather than research just to enhance my DProf learning. I had access to other older people who were choosing to dance so could invite them to participate and the first aspect of my research focussed on getting qualitative, phenomenological interviews from them so that understanding could be gained about the reasons and feelings active older people had for choosing to dance at this stage of their lives. These qualitative interviews were insightful, raising important topics and evidence and added vibrancy and interest to the report. Initially, my research design was specific, straightforward mixed-methodology which used qualitative research leading to a quantitative survey involving more older dancers. However, this design adapted over time as I became involved in new interesting work and dancing opportunities.

I began collaborating with new colleagues although carrying out my research activities alone. My learning, research and practice were influencing each other and the results of my work efforts and involvement in various activities benefited others, my research and my own learning. My research contributes by making explicit this process showing ways new knowledge and understandings can emerge from work-based research even when carried out in ad-hoc, sometimes unpredictable, ways. There were positive aspects of working and researching with reflexivity. A



multidisciplinary/transdisciplinary approach liberated the way I used literature and learned about related topics. I identified a wide range of topics from different disciplines that related to my research questions. I showed the importance of creating underpinning structures, models and tools which became strong underlying frameworks enabling creativity and flexibility of thought to flourish. “Live evidence” from primary and secondary sources from my work activities were integrated into my qualitative research activities and desktop research. This was messy because potentially there were so many topics and ideas that could be interpreted in different ways. My research processes showed it was possible to scope widely, sometimes deeply and sometimes broadly depending on the topic. I showed it was possible to research topics even when terminology for what is being researched was not established and practice was still emerging. New knowledge and solutions emerged by clustering, interpreting, synthesising theories and ideas, weaving around and through different disciplines, reports and practice

Carrying out research with transdisciplinarity was demanding, especially as parts came together gradually and the process could not be rushed. By remaining focussed and determined, it was possible to stay motivated even when it seemed there was no end in sight. I experimented with ways to draft and re-draft the report. Knowledge could be interpreted and synthesised in different clusters, enabling findings and recommendations to be created. My exploratory case study approach pulled aspects of my research inquiry together. I showed that a patient, persistent, approach gradually enabled new knowledge to emerge and kept me motivated. My report shows that when writing a long, complex creative research report, there needs to be methodological approaches that are fit-for-purpose including firm structures, and iterative as well as linear pathways. When faced with new challenges, the research design and methods had to be adapted. This way of working enabled my report to be written in a coherent way.

Dealing with complexity required skills including

- making sufficient time to seek-out and learn about possible research methodological approaches, selecting those that were useful and not being afraid to discard those that are no longer applicable, so creating a unique design to enable the research to proceed and eventually come to an end.
- being open-minded and allowing sufficient thinking time to be creative

- not presuming outcomes too early and making sound decisions about what is more applicable and beneficial
- being prepared to experiment and juxtapose ideas, edit, hone and consider using different perspectives.
- Taking risks, not panicking when difficulties arise and working with uncertainties to achieve creative results that make useful, realistic, contributions
- Encouraging collaborations between people from different sectors and academic disciplines and finding innovative ways of working to achieve desired results.

I have shown work-based doctorates can be written by people at the latter stage of their careers, who are working alone with limited resources, where work itself is uncertain. As an older person, I succeeded in taming the complexities of the work-based doctorate. Although, at times, I wondered if I had made a huge mistake and should have stuck to my initial design, I have no regrets because the end result has gone far beyond what I imagined; experiences have benefitted others as well as myself and I have written a wide ranging, interesting report that meets academic requirements.

My report is an example to others who want to challenge themselves to carry out transdisciplinary work-based research. It was possible to steer/choreograph my research through all its complexities and eventually having designed my multi-methodological, multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary exploratory case study with strong underpinning structures I could research creatively to write a meaningful, informative, credible robust final report. My experience was a “dancing journey” but other researchers need to create their own methodological research journeys to produce coherent, robust, unique reports that benefit others as well as themselves.

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## **Department for Work and Pensions**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions>

Elixir Festival, Sadler's Wells

<http://www.sadlerswells.com/screen/video/3884457938001#>

**Flourishing Lives** - <http://claremont-project.org/vision/36-flourishing-lives>

**Foundation for Community Dance (FCD)** [www.communitydance.org.uk](http://www.communitydance.org.uk)

**Green Candle** [www.greencandle.com](http://www.greencandle.com)

**Laban Guild** [www.labanguild.org.uk](http://www.labanguild.org.uk)

**Lift Tottenham** <https://www.liftfestival.com/lift-tottenham/>

**London Arts and Health Forum** <http://www.lahf.org.uk/>

**Marks of Time** <http://www.chezfred.org.uk/chat/MarksOfTime/index.html>

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**One Dance UK** <http://www.onedanceuk.org>

**OPAL** <http://olderpeoplechoices.yolasite.com/opal-project.php>

**People Dancing Conference** <http://www.communitydance.org.uk/international-event-2014.html>

**Public Wisdom Conference** [http://publicwisdom.uk/cms/?page\\_id=8](http://publicwisdom.uk/cms/?page_id=8)

**Skills Active** [www.skillsactive.com](http://www.skillsactive.com)

**Skills for Care and Development** [www.skillsforcareanddevelopment.co.uk](http://www.skillsforcareanddevelopment.co.uk)

**Skills for Health** [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk)

**Sport England** [www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org)

**University of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Age U3A** [www.U3A.org.uk](http://www.U3A.org.uk)

## **WEMWBS**

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/med/research/platform/wemwbs/researchers/>

**Youth Dance England (YDE)** [www.yde.org.uk](http://www.yde.org.uk)

## **APPENDICES**

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Creative Dance 60+



**What is it?** Creative Dance 60+ is a small grassroots not-for-profit organisation presently funded by the Community Development Foundation and the local Communities First Board. CD60+ was created in July 2010 by Jackie Richards, who wanted to share her enthusiasm for creative dance activities with other active older people living in and around Tottenham, North London. Our core activity is holding open creative dance sessions at the Bernie Grant Arts Centre and to promote positive images and attitudes towards older people.

**What we do?** CD60+ offers creative dance activities for active older people especially those who have not done this type of dance before so they can develop their dance capability and participate in meaningful dance activities that encourage better health, wellbeing, friendships, creativity and enjoyment. Creative dance involves the whole person – body, intellect, emotions, relating to and dancing with others; active participation in the creative process whether dancing alone, in groups or performing to audiences. People from diverse backgrounds come together to share a common interest, so promoting confidence, social cohesion and new friendships.

**How?** Open sessions are held weekly. People pay a small fee only when they attend; no one is turned away for financial reasons. There is a welcoming approach and participants respect and encourage one another. Attendance includes regulars as well as those who come when they can fit dancing in with their other responsibilities. Our dance artist, Molly Wright leads our sessions. She has an inclusive approach that is conducive to working with older people. Dancers can volunteer to perform in our group "No Dance! No Joy" which was launched in December 2012. We have performed locally and beyond sharing our enthusiasm for dancing together. Our repertoire is building up gradually within our sessions. We have celebrations at the end of each term.

**Evaluation:** Jackie is presently participating in a work-based doctorate and her research project is "When I'm 64 I want to dance! - active older people participating in creative dance". She evaluates the progress and development of CD60+ and is willing to share information about creating and managing grassroots dance organisations promoting choices for active older people and positive images of them, as well as CD60+ enthusiasm for dance.

**Interested?** - For further information and contact details:  
 Our website: [www.creativedance60.net](http://www.creativedance60.net) for further details, pics and videos  
 Contact Jackie by email: [creativedance60@gmail.com](mailto:creativedance60@gmail.com)

## Appendix 2

### **Background: development of dance in US and UK from end of 19<sup>th</sup> century until present day in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

This appendix gives background information about ways dance progressed from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and how they are relevant today. It is a brief summary providing underpinning knowledge of the historical context and some of the main choreographers that influenced dance's progression into modern, post-modern, New Dance and contemporary dance whilst other dance types such as classical ballet and social dance remained popular. What happened in the past acts as the underlying building blocks for the emergence of "active older people's creative dance" time in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### **Dance types, genres and innovators**

Different types and genres of dance and movements within different contexts, times in history and locations are tabulated below.

The following grid gives a list of dance types. This is a way to categorise dance as there are many different variations.

Communal	Educational	Leisure and Recreational
Religious and Ritual	Social	Therapeutic
Theatrical	Traditional	

(Based on dance facts [www.dancefacts.net/dance-types](http://www.dancefacts.net/dance-types) )

Within each of these dance types there are different genres. I scoped Sorrell (1967), Cheney (1975), Butterworth (2012), Bales and Netti-Foil (2008), Lihs (2009) and Burkhardt & Rhodes (2012). Different dance styles and genres have sub-sets, traditions, techniques, choreographic styles and histories. They influence one another and combine in different ways. The following groups gives broad coverage relevant to my research.

**Professional performance dance:**

Examples: Ballet; modern; contemporary; post-modern dance; musical theatre; tap. Roots go back to the Italian Renaissance when music, physical art and poetry emerged. Ballet remains a dominant dance genre whilst others such as modern and contemporary evolved during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and continue to do so.

**Ballroom Dances**

Examples: Waltz, Tango, Cha-cha-cha, Fox-trot, Samba, Quickstep, Jive  
Roots from the Renaissance, courtly dances and folk dance. Originating from Europe and South America, some are long-established. There is increasing interest amongst all ages stimulated by television programmes.

**Worldwide Dances and Latin Dances**

Examples: Traditional dance from India, Japan, China, Africa, Europe, Middle East  
Flamenco, Salsa, folk dance, belly dancing,  
Western culture has been influenced by the East for centuries. Travel, migration and modern technology are changing attitudes towards different cultures. These genres are growing in popularity and are cross-fertilising with others dance forms.

**African-American and Traditional Jazz dances**

Examples: Swing, jive, rock-n'-roll, Charleston, tap, boogie,  
African–American Jazz and Blues have been influential since the beginning of the 20th century. Roots originate from Africa, slavery and oppression.

**Modern Dances in the post-modern era**

Examples: Punk, Rave, disco, Bollywood  
Social change and new technology encourage new genres to emerge especially among the young.

**Hip-hop/Funk.**

Examples: Breakdance, Street Jazz, Locking and Popping,



These originate from the street and young people since 1970s and are popular in US, United Kingdom, France, South Korea and increasingly worldwide. They have wide exposure in media, cinema and TV.

Many genres are popular and have relevance for different groups of older people. My research report only directly considers those genres directly relevant to my work activities, namely “active older people’s creative/contemporary dance. Classical ballet<sup>28</sup>; folk dances, ballroom and dance therapy are not researched as main topics. However, I recognise all/any styles and genres may influence “active older people’s creative dance”, to a greater or lesser extent dependant on facilitators’ interests.

Lansley and Early (2011) considering older professional dancers’ careers emphasise that making and practising dance is relevant to its social context and needs to retain the adventure of art. They consider dance being a life-force that everyone has a right to participate in and watch.

“In future, there will need to be new dance languages, vocabularies and processes rather than slavish commitment to one technique or style”.

(P185)

Although, my research is not about older professional dancers this statement is important. (See F8,5.2)

### **Some background History**

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century ballet had developed to great heights of virtuoso technique, ballerinas and beauty. The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw new ideas being explored. Collaborating artists from visual arts, music and dance created new operas and ballets. Expressionism, Dadaism and surrealism ensured that previous aesthetic ideas were challenged.

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<sup>28</sup> There are some older people’s sessions and dance companies offering ballet for example “Sage” in London and the RAD pilots see chapter 5. I attended Sadler’s Wells outreach ballet class at Claremont.

In the US Isadora Duncan created a new form of dance which freed movement, and got rid of restrictive clothing. She was influenced by Greek art, nature and children's movement. She influenced the development of a new aesthetic order. Hewitt (2005) suggests Duncan showed dancing could be expressive and not representational or romanticised as in ballet and reflected the rise of individualism and democracy. Dance could be immediate, cultural expression In Germany Rudolph Laban explored principles of movement and dance analysis. His work influenced pre-WW2 European dance and the development of modern dance in US modern dance as a theorist and teacher (Sorrell 1967), His students/ followers influenced US professional modern dance as well as recreational, educational and therapeutic dance in many countries<sup>29</sup>. (Butterworth 2012:80). His theories explored ways of ordering and analysing human movement. Including relationships between the body and space; different types and directions of bodily movement and connections between psychology and motion. (Robinson and Heruta 1988.)

In US, choreographers emerged including Martha Graham who stripped dance down to its essentials and developed a disciplined technique involving contraction and release. In 1960s Merce Cunningham liberated dance from previous constraints. He was interested in pure dance and experimentation, often involving "chance", and his dance compositions were abstract. He initiated of a new aesthetic and his heritage has been influential. He was part of the "Dance Explosion" around New York Greenwich Village which heralded the beginnings of US "post-modern" dance. Some dancers rebelled against modern dance which had become more akin to ballet. It was the "hippie period" and everything was being questioned. Movements from everyday life such as walking or running were often preferred to disciplined dance techniques. The dancers and young audiences were the components for performances. Often the aim of dance events was to shock. They included improvisations and "happenings". However, new choreographers who were interested in shape and precision emerged. New choreography began to be performed and dance on stage became increasingly varied.

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<sup>29</sup> I studied his principles practically and theoretically when training to be a movement and creative dance teacher in the 1960s.

Meanwhile, in the UK, during early and mid-1960s, Mackrell (1992) suggests ballet was the only dance taken seriously in the UK. Few knew about US modern dance. Amateurs participated in folk dancing, ballroom dancing and keep-fit classes. Some children attended ballet, tap or stage classes and might do folk dance and possibly Laban's modern educational dance at school.<sup>30</sup> She suggests the British public were suspicious about dance other than ballets, pantomimes or musicals. Jordan (1992:1) suggests that expressionist contemporary dance derived from Martha Graham which advocated dance as an expression of the emotional condition, first became established as an alternative to ballet in the UK in the mid-60s. In 1966 The London School of Contemporary Dance (1966) and in 1967 the London Contemporary Dance Theatre were launched and based at The Place, Euston, London. In 1966 Ballet Rambert transformed from a classical ballet to a contemporary dance company. This created new interest and momentum for professional contemporary dance<sup>31</sup>.

"New Dance" began in 1970s on the fringes of British Dance scene. Mackrell suggests it was about choreographic experimentation and altered the ways people thought about dance. It initiated a range of political and artistic ideas and helped to shape UK dance performance. Jordan (1992) suggests that the 1970s was the decade in which British Contemporary Dance established its own identity/identities independent of US traditions. This was the era of punk and political unrest. British New Dance like US radical post-modern equivalent, believed dance took many forms and dancers and choreographers should produce and perform whatever they wanted and could work outside established dance companies. In UK this dance movement considered dance could be part of everyone's life no matter what age, shape or colour. It should not be separate from the real world of politics and economics. New dance companies formed and The Place, Euston, encouraged alternative dance styles and attracted new dance enthusiasts and audiences. The

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<sup>30</sup> I attended The Laban Art of Movement Studio from 1966-1968. Laban principles were also taught in some colleges of education and PE colleges.

<sup>31</sup> The 1960s-1970s was when active older people were in their youth or young adults. With peers, I saw different dance companies including Merce Cunningham (US post-modern), London Contemporary Theatre and Rambert (UK contemporary) Martha Graham (US modern), Alwin Nikolais (US modern) and Alvin Ailey (US modern) during late 60s. It was an innovative and exciting time.

interest in post-modern dance performance and audiences grew. (See F6). More funding and recognition was forthcoming. Ballet and modern dance remained popular. American, European and British companies toured and performed.

Parallel to this, the Community Dance Sector developed in the UK from the 1970s. Amans (2008) gives an overview of "Community Dance". It grew out of the UK New Dance movement (see above) and was process-oriented focussing on participation and celebrating diversity and providing positive dance experiences. By the mid-1980s, the aims included demystifying dance as an art-form, encouraging dance activities irrespective of age, class or cultural background and reinstating dance as an integral part of life. Following the 1997 election, initiatives involving marginalised groups gained momentum. Arts funding policies shifted so arts groups received funding for outreach work in keeping with New Labour political thinking. Old people, disabled people and alienated youth were targeted as vulnerable and marginalised groups. Community Dance became politically relevant because it was thought it might raise disadvantaged people's confidence; by exploration of different cultures and aspirations, encouraging critical thinking and acquiring positive relationships. More paid work became available for community dance-artists to work with these groups. At this time elderly people (pensioners) were considered a marginalised, vulnerable group. Houston (2005) warned dance practitioners and politicians they could not assume outcomes achieved would meet their expectations because although community dance could be transformational and empowering individuals experienced dance in their own ways.(see examples in F2,3,5)

Bartlett (2009) suggests a new pedagogy is required for people's dance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Dance can be concerned with feelings as well as how it looks. People become potential artists when they enter the dance space, placing their aspirations and ideas central to the dance process and dance practitioners can accept and recognise this. He emphasises the importance of wide ranging aesthetics rather than highly developed techniques and seeking out only the talented. This is important for older people's dance because older people can contribute as well as develop their capabilities. Houston (2010) argues that community dance in the UK has been a success story. She suggests there is increasing cross-participation by dance professionals working for and with the

public. Previous fears that community dance will become marginalised and separate from other dance have been alleviated. (See F6)

Climenhaga (2009) outlines contributions Pina Bausch (1940-2009) made. She was influenced by Laban principles and US “happenings” .As dance director in Wuppertal, Germany she developed her “Tanztheater” choreography involving physical dance performance that reflects back upon the audience making them aware of their own complicity and the worlds presented to them. Self – consciousness and emotionality is expressed through the dancers’ bodies. She was not interested in ways dancers move but what moves them. Dance is uncovered and theatre is pushed in new directions. Her works involved older people and aging bodies.

### **Aide-Memoire Grid for semi-structured conversational interviews with older people who are dancing.**

**Research title: When I'm 64 I want to dance – active older people participating in creative dance.**

#### **Research questions**

1. What experiences do active older people gain from becoming involved in creative dance?
2. What meaning do they give to their dancing?
3. How can sharing interests in similar phases of life enhance wellbeing, practice and image?
4. How can sessions be structured to create the best environment for encouraging inclusion?
5. How will widening opportunities for creative dance performance positively promote active older people's images and capabilities, changing attitudes at local, national, social, political levels and within performing arts?

#### **Aims of my DProf which inform the research interviews**

1. To influence and inform culture and leisure decision/policy makers and creative dance practitioners to increase availability and promote involvement in dance and performing arts
2. To encourage positive images of active older people through performing arts activities in communities by participation, performance and as audiences
3. To identify positive contributions active older people can make in their communities through dance and performing arts
4. To investigate the influence creative dance has as it competes with other priorities, choices and responsibilities in active older people's lives

June 2012 onwards

Topics/overall questions	Potential prompts/probes/aide memoire only. Probe but don't be prescriptive as each person will answer differently.	Comments
<p><b>Prior to the conversation:</b></p> <p><b>We will go through the letter and consent form which will be signed before the conversation starts.</b></p> <p><b>Then.....</b></p> <p>Let's go through some information about you before we begin our conversation Tell me a bit more about yourself I have some information to collect</p>	<p>Go through letter and consent form and answer any questions if necessary.</p> <p>Name Age Where you live (not specific) Choose your own anonymous name to be used in the research Ethnic Identity (Self identify) Present work, if any - part/fulltime/volunteering/interests Education experiences Previous work experience Family and caring responsibilities Anything you want to ask or comment on before we start the conversation.....</p>	
<p><b>Start the conversation</b> <b>Starter to put interviewee at ease.</b> <b>Preliminary Topic:</b> <b>General - about your life at the moment</b></p> <p>To start our conversation can you <b>briefly</b> describe your life at the moment including any aspects that are important to you.</p>	<p>E.g. Health, family, work life balance, how you feel, finances, enjoyment, concerns, transition, retired, adventures</p>	
<b>Relationships and Community</b>		

Topics/overall questions	Potential prompts/probes/aide memoire only. Probe but don't be prescriptive as each person will answer differently.	Comments
<p>It has been said that as one gets older you have more satisfying relationships. What do you think? Can you give examples?</p> <p>How important is it for you to feel connected to others?</p> <p>Do you think you are part of your local community?</p> <p>Do you feel part of a local community?</p> <p>What experiences do you think will improve isolation in communities?</p> <p>What is your opinion about doing activities with people and children of different ages?</p> <p>What has it felt like being part of XXX dance?</p> <p>What enhances or hinders your life taking part in local activities?</p>	<p>Networks you belong to and what they give you and mean to you.</p> <p>Being in family, having friends, part of the local community</p> <p>Give some examples and how you feel and what parts you play in the local community</p> <p>This could be any local activities and/or XXX dance XXX as a community of dancers or interest</p>	
<p><b>The phase of your life</b></p> <p>Generally, what you think and feel about your present phase of life?</p> <p>What are the biggest opportunities for you at this phase of life?</p>	<p>Probing and getting individual answers building on what has been said before</p>	



Topics/overall questions	Potential prompts/probes/aide memoire only. Probe but don't be prescriptive as each person will answer differently.	Comments
What are the biggest concerns in your life now?		
<p><b>Image and what is an active older person</b></p> <p>“Creativity can bloom with more depth and richness in older adults because it is informed by knowledge and experience” Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Give reasons and examples</p> <p>What images are associated with later life? What do you think these say about being older in our society?</p> <p>Have you any good ideas for a name/label for active older people like us say aged 55-80 years?</p>	<p>What are the good and not so good things – time, freedom, memory, health issues, new opportunities</p> <p>How old do you think is an “elderly or old person”?</p> <p>What do you think the image of active older is now?</p> <p>What are some of the stereotypes of older people? How do you compare with these?</p>	

Topics/overall questions	Potential prompts/probes/aide memoire only. Probe but don't be prescriptive as each person will answer differently.	Comments
<p><b>Finally</b></p> <p>What is the best thing about being the age you are?</p> <p>In five years' time you would like to .....</p> <p>If I had a wish for yourself what would it be?</p> <p>If you had a wish for the world?</p> <p>Is there anything else you want to say before we stop our conversation</p> <p>Thank you so much etc.</p>		

Dear P1

**An invitation to participate in a research project:**

**“When I’m Sixty-Four I Want to Dance!” – Active older people participating in creative dance.**

Since setting up Creative Dance 60+, I have become a student at the Institute of Work Based Learning at Middlesex University. I am participating in a programme that will lead to a doctorate in Professional Studies. The programme includes developing and reflecting on my work practice and conducting a research project. I would like to invite you to participate in my research.

The research project is exploring, through the voices and experiences of active older people, the competing responsibilities and demands in their lives and reasons for choosing to participate in creative dance.

The findings are intended to influence decision and policy makers who have power to bring about change as well as dance practitioners; so contributing to changing attitudes towards older people from different backgrounds and their capabilities as dancers and ways they can be more involved in their local communities. It will help break down stereotypes of what older people can do and ways they can be part of their communities. “Retirement”, in the traditional sense is disappearing. I hope my research will enable more active older people to have real choices and participate in performing arts if they wish.

I will be carrying out about 15 in-depth conversations with women and men from different parts of the country who are choosing to dance in creative ways. This will be followed up with an on-line survey involving a greater number of active older dancers. The survey will use themes that have emerged from the in-depth conversations.

If you decide to participate, we will have a conversation together. It will be up to 1.5 hours and we can meet locally at a place of your choice. Information will flow from our conversation and will include topics such as

- your needs and responsibilities during this phase of your life e.g. health issues, caring for others, work etc.
- what choices you are making including the reasons for deciding to participate in creative dance sessions and whether there have been any benefits or disadvantages;
- what dancing means to you
- what you think and feel about this phase of your life
- what are your present concerns and aspirations and for the future?
- any other suggestions or ideas that you think are important and you wish to include.

We will have a conversation and I will be encouraging you to speak openly and honestly to express your thoughts and feelings. Taking part in the research is entirely voluntary and your decision. You may drop out at any time or decide not to answer any question you

are not comfortable answering. The conversation will be recorded so I can accurately reflect and interpret what we discussed. I will transcribe and analyse our recorded conversation. The recording will be destroyed two years after I have completed the project.

Participation is confidential. Information will be kept securely at my home. This means that your identity linked to what you have said will be known only to me. Your identity will not be reported or made public in any way. It is anonymous except to me. The results of the study may be published or presented at professional meetings but your identity will not be revealed.

Following our interview, I will not contact you again about this research unless I need clarification on something you have said.

I hope you will find taking part enjoyable. It will give you a chance to gain more insights into your own opinions and thoughts about being an active older person who has chosen to be involved in creative dance. I hope that others in society will benefit from the results of this research and the outcomes will influence some decision makers and dance practitioners.

There is no payment for taking part but I will provide for any refreshments during our interview.

If you have any complaint you can complain to Carol Costley, Chair, The Ethics Board, Institute of Work Based Learning, College House, Hendon Campus, Middlesex University, The Burroughs, London NW4 4BT

[email: wbl@mdx.ac.uk](mailto:wbl@mdx.ac.uk)

I am happy to answer any questions you have about this research or give you more information.

Please can you let me know within the next week whether you would like to participate. You can contact me on 0208 8899281 [or jackie134@btopenworld.com](mailto:jackie134@btopenworld.com) to confirm that you wish to take part and we can arrange where and when to meet. When we meet we will go through this letter and the attached consent form. You will be asked to sign the consent form and you can ask further questions if you wish before we start our conversation.

With best wishes

Jackie Richards

## Consent Form

### **Research Project - Active older people participating in creative dance.**

- I have been sent and read the invitation letter which gives me information about the research study I have been asked to participate in. I have had the opportunity to discuss this in detail and asked the researcher questions about this information.
- The researcher has fully explained the nature and purpose of the research and I believe that I now understand what is being proposed.
- I understand that my personal involvement and any data about me personally, arising from this study, will remain strictly confidential and any quotes used will be anonymous.
- I have agreed that the researcher can use a voice recording device as a means of collecting data.
- I have been informed about ways my collected data in this research project will be used, ways it may be disclosed, and how long it will be retained.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from this research project at any time, without giving a reason for withdrawing or not to answer any questions or discuss any topics that I do not feel comfortable answering or talking about.
- I fully and freely consent to participate in this research.
- I consent to the researcher publishing and disseminating the outcomes of this research project in the future.

Participant's Name .....(Block capitals)

Participant's signature    Date .....

As the researcher responsible for this project, I confirm that the participant named above has discussed and understood the nature and purpose of the research to be undertaken.

Researcher's name .....(Block capitals)

Researcher's signature ..... Date:

## **Articles**

### **“Keep Dancing”**

*Sardines Magazine*

### **“When I’m 64 I Want to Dance”**

*Magazine of the Laban Guild (2013)*

### **“From Couch to Companionship”**

*Dignity Magazine (November – December 2014)*



Paddy Jones auditions for *Britain's Got Talent* with her Spanish dance partner Nico Espinosa... forty years her junior

Photo: Tom Dymond/Thames/REX



Wayne Sleep's TV programme *Big Baller* showed how people of all shapes and sizes can raise the bar, reminding us that dance, even the difficult stuff, is for everyone, including the over-55s.

And, as if we could forget, only a few weeks ago seventy-nine-year-old great grandmother Paddy Jones really hoisted the 'Senior Citizen' flag to the top of the mast when she won all four *Britain's Got Talent* judges, and the entire nation, with her show-stopping acrobatic dance routine.

Raymond Langford Jones recently visited *Creative Dance 60 Plus* in Tottenham, London, to discuss with its founder, Jackie Richards, opportunities that exist for seniors to kick away the years.

# keep dancing!

by Raymond Langford Jones

**S**o you think you can dance - and why the hell not? Just because you're white-haired, maybe a tad *rheumatically* or carrying a stone or two more than you'd like, doesn't mean it's too late to release your inner Astaire or Busell. There are more and more opportunities for people of all age-groups and abilities to express themselves through dance. Anything goes. It's as broad as it is long - as, ahem, you may be! *Strictly Come Dancing*, too, has done its bit to show that the over-fifty-fives can still make a good fist or, more appropriately ankle, on the dance floor. Look at Pamela Stephenson and Russell Grant.

For anyone, but especially the more mature of us, dancing of any kind is a marvellous way of socialising, losing that feeling of being an anonymous silver blob; getting your life back and... belonging. Great for your health, too, encouraging group awareness, increasing confidence, giving a structure to your week, getting you out of the house. So, win-win every way.

## SO WHAT IS CREATIVE DANCE?

There have always been distinct markets for older people to participate in partner and group dancing, such as: *Ballroom*, *Latin American*, *Folk Dancing* and *Line Dancing*, not to mention *Tap*, *Zumba* and *Salsa* etc. Indeed, many of us have spent some of our best years - and continuing - hoofing in operatic and musical society shows!

Creative Dance, on the other hand, is not concerned with the sequences of formalised steps and positions that characterise most dance genres. It specifically

sets out to encourage freedom of movement - but within a structure. Apart from solo work, it requires strong teamwork, a shared sense of rhythm and timing - whether to create pure abstract movement, a specific mood or emotion, or a narrative thread. It can involve a wide range of sound stimuli; any suitable music or other sounds, even verse; percussive rhythms and, of course, props.

Work for older physiques tends to concentrate on movement at its most interpretative. Importantly, dancers are encouraged to be actively involved in developing the choreography, incorporating their ideas. It can, however, be enjoyable and challenging to learn a dance sequence from the dance artist/teacher.

## DANCING FOR THE FUN OF IT

A non-profit-making inclusive group, 'Creative Dance 60 Plus' meets regularly for ninety minutes every Wednesday morning. Participants are asked to pay a fee of £2.50 for each open session they attend.

A teacher for some years, Jackie Richards has moved on to develop and manage a range of vocational qualifications, notably for the Care sector; so she knows all about people's needs and skills. Leaving full-time work at sixty meant she could concentrate on her other love, dancing, and getting back into the community. Now, as an older person herself who has moved into the next phase of her life, as well as running CD60+, she is also doing a work-based doctorate based on 'Active Older People Participating in Creative Dance'. A social enabler, she hopes her research may help influence policy and decision-makers in this sphere.

She explains that CD60+ is a grass-roots group (presently funded from the Community Development Foundation) on

a very different scale to some of the more ambitious, performing set-ups, which sets out to:

*"promote positive images of active older people as full members of the community, with experience and talents to share with others the enjoyment of dance ... to be healthy, creative, have fun, to make friends and to encourage neighbourliness and break down barriers. Our diversity is one of our greatest strengths."*

(See: [www.creativedance60.net](http://www.creativedance60.net))

It's a bright Wednesday morning when I arrive at the Bernie Grant Arts Centre in a socially eclectic and lively corner of North London. I open the door of an airy modern studio to find professional dance artist/teacher Geelin Little guiding seven mature women and two men through some initial exercises. Gentle but motivating music emanates from loudspeakers in the background: "Curl your body ... now unfold ... make contact with another person ... and rest."

Everyone is totally absorbed and looks completely at home in the space - and with each other. Most participants have been coming ever since Jackie set up the group three years ago, whilst more recent conscripts have obviously settled in well. Despite the differences in their previous experience of dance, the overall impression is one of aesthetic harmony and total group sensitivity.

Later, over hot chocolate and home-made cake baked by one of the members, I chat to them about what they get from the activity.

Barbara says it's "very liberating." She enjoys "the interaction ... it's my kind of group: friendly, comfortable." Also "I have arthritis and need to keep moving."

Judith joined a few months after retiring

[www.sardinesmagazine.co.uk](http://www.sardinesmagazine.co.uk)

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from full-time work. It's her sort of group too: "I've been in other dance groups run by earnest young pros who are more interested in teaching steps; they take all the joy away. There aren't many groups where you can dance just for the fun of it."

Pew tells me he "...first danced in (his) teens, doing Latin American and Ballroom." He's a founder member and one of the few men. I was not surprised to find that still-glamorous Hazel had previously "won medals for disco dancing", whilst Evelyn had "especially enjoyed it when the group took part in an event at Alexandra Palace."

For those who wish to perform, however; CD60+ participants can volunteer to join 'No Dance, No Joy' which dances locally and beyond. The dance group and sessions are led by their regular teacher/dance artist Molly Wright who recently set up her own 'Damn Fine Dance' performing company.

Intergenerational work has included organising a *Big Dance 2012* project with a local school campus on the Broadwater Farm estate, whilst CD60+ has also developed friendly links with the local professional dance company, 'Tavaziva'.

Years ago as trainee teachers, Jackie and I had both received a grounding in Creative Dance for use in schools, concentrating on awareness and use of Space, Effort, the Body and Relationships (i.e. working with other people). Watching the dancers at CD60+, I couldn't help thinking how appropriate it is that dance with similar criteria can increasingly be used to enable people stay fit and motivated later on in life too.

#### CHALLENGING HEARTS AND MINDS

A quote from one seventy-two-year-old on the website of the Sadler's Wells internationally renowned 'Company of Elders' reads: "It's always been an inner feeling in my body that I've got to dance, it's so uplifting and it actually makes you feel younger."

Traditionally older people have danced as part of everyday celebrations and social events. In many cultural groups this

is still the case. But it took Alan Yentob's excellent 2009 *Imagine* programme *Save the Last Dance for Me*, featuring the Company of Elders to raise greater national awareness of dance for the older generation. This provided the catalyst that recently led to the establishment of more dance groups - Jackie's CD60+ being one of them.

(See: [www.sadlerswells.com/learning/learning-performing/company-of-elders](http://www.sadlerswells.com/learning/learning-performing/company-of-elders))

Since then, dance for older people has really taken off. 'Ballet Rambert', always at the forefront of contemporary dance, moved last December into new South Bank premises on a site owned by Coin St. Community Builders, for a peppercorn rent - in return for one pair of ballet shoes a year! Oh, and the commitment that it provides a significant community dance programme. 'Mercury Movers', the company's group for older dancers, was featured in the national press when it performed for The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh at the official inauguration ceremony.

Fergus Early's well-established 'Green Candle Dance Company' in Tower Hamlets pushes the envelope further including, as one of its goals: to "explore through dance, some of the most challenging human issues we face as individuals, as communities and as a society." 'Green Candle' also creates productions that include participatory workshops and organises inset and professional development courses on leading dance with older people and early years - and for people with or without disabilities.

(See: [www.greencandleanddance.com](http://www.greencandleanddance.com))

And so it goes on - not just in London but up and down the country. In the South East, for instance, the 'Three Score Dance Company' in Brighton, also inspired by the Company of Elders and founded by Christina Thompson and Saskia Heriz under the guidance of Rehearsal Director Jason Keenan-Smith, sets out to commission work that "engages, entertains and captures the imagination and delivers performances" and challenge "hearts and

minds through the art of contemporary dance." (See: [threescoredance.co.uk](http://threescoredance.co.uk))

At the Exeter Arts Centre, dance facilitator Haley Starling also provides sessions for older people. (See: [www.exeterphoenix.org.uk/learning/classes-workshops](http://www.exeterphoenix.org.uk/learning/classes-workshops)).

#### NATIONAL SUPPORT

Underpinning the 'dance for older people' movement (pun intended) is the Leicester-based 'Foundation for Community Dance', which exists to promote dance for "anyone involved in creating opportunities for people to experience and participate in dance" with a vision of "a world where dance is part of everyone's life" and mission to "make engagement with dance important to individuals, communities and society."

A professional organisation, FfCD, works 'with, and on behalf of artists, organisations and teachers involved in leading, delivering or supporting community and participatory dance' has a membership of over 4,500 dance professionals worldwide - and boasts David Bintley and Deborah Bull amongst its Directors.

(See: [info@communitydance.org.uk](mailto:info@communitydance.org.uk)).

#### ALL FOR ONE - AND ONE FOR ALL

In her new exercise video for 'oldies' - as she likes to call us - choreographer and dancer Dame Gillian Lynne, now eighty-eight, also shows that there is no age limit on having fun and keeping fit to music. Moving creatively in any form is a terrific way of continuing to keep active.

I left Tottenham exhilarated. Creative Dance 60s' class had made me feel rejuvenated and light-of-step, too, from watching the dancers, oblivious of their years and technical limitations, exploring new physical skills and bonding with others.

The session at the Bernie Grant Arts Centre had concluded with a prepared structured improvisation and creative dance entitled *All for One*, showing how a person can dance with others - yet alone.

*Dance for All*, though, would have seemed just as appropriate.



Some of Creative Dance 60+ dancers with founder Jackie Richards (far left) and dance artist Molly Wright (second-left).

Photo: Jo Alexander

Available on PC & Mac

Available on Windows 8

Available on BlackBerry

Available on pocketmags.com

Jackie, Molly and CD60+ dancers working out a choreographic piece. Photo: Jo Alexander



# When I'm 64 I want to Dance

## Active Older People Participating in Creative Dance

Jackie Richards

In this article I want to share some thoughts and provoke discussion contributing towards the debate about regenerating Laban's Principles. These are interim ideas rather than research findings and recommendations. I am using 'creative dance' as a broad term for interpretative dance that is not classical ballet or facilitated set routines. As yet, there is no agreed terminology for people aged 50–110+. 'active older people' means people in the second phase of life (Phillips, 2002) and who are not frail. It is helpful to remember that by 2050, it is forecast that 1/3 of the population in developed countries will be older people, presenting social, economic and cultural challenges (UNFPA 2012), while older people leaving work now will not disappear into retirement. In fact, retirement as known is disappearing.

### My research

I am participating in a work-based doctorate (DProf) at the Institute of Work Based Learning, Middlesex University, UK. My research project is called 'When I'm 64, I Want to Dance: active older people participating in creative dance' with aims to influence decision/policy makers and dance practitioners to understand the benefits of dance, encourage positive older people's images and find reasons for older people choosing to dance at this phase in their lives. I am using mixed-methods research including desk research, in-depth interviews using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) and an on-line survey based on identified themes. As it is work-based there is research from everyday life including observations, narrative, reflection, case study, and live evidence.

I am not researching choreography or related post-modern dance as others are better placed than me to concentrate on these subjects. My contribution is my positionality and experience as an older person who is dancing, who has access to other older people who are dancing. I am enabling others to dance and building on my knowledge and skills from my career, previous earlier dance experience and new evolving work.

### Laban in my life

During my initial desk research it became clear I had knowledge gaps about what has happened in dance during the last forty years. I joined The Laban Guild and soon after a large envelope arrived containing magazine Vol 31, No3, Autumn 2012 which included Anna Carlisle's address 'Perennial Principles' given at the Motus Hummus Hounstable, California, June 2012. It included a history of Laban's influence on modern educational dance and its potential for regeneration. Perhaps it was coincidental but it was timely.

I attended the Laban Art of Movement Studio, Adlestree from 1966-68, the hey-day of The Beatles and optimism. As Anna described, the 2-1 course taught there was mainly practical with psychology, music, art, English, kinesiology and anatomy. It prepared specialist, secondary school movement teachers and like most of my peers, this role for me was short-lived. Perhaps moving for hours to 'Ya-ta-ta too' was not good preparation for teaching adolescents, and 'Hick, dab, sash' not best terminology for being taken seriously. The Laban experience enhanced my dance capabilities (previously I had learned Russian ballet, tap, stage and jazz dance) and I learned about arts and relating to others. Following my brief encounter in a secondary school I taught in primary schools then changed career working successfully for an awarding organisation. I set up lunch-time dance classes which later led me to adult education, teaching classes in movement and dance, devising my own content and successfully teaching people from many backgrounds and ages. This continued

whilst at home with my small children. In 1997 I returned to my awarding body career, remaining there in different roles for twenty one years. In 2008 I left, aged sixty. I was a senior manager with interesting work, supportive colleagues and a high profile internally and externally. I left because I wanted to dance again and participate in neighbourhood activities whilst I had good health. Five years later I am immersed in dance activities as a performer, a founder/manager of a creative dance organisation and working on my doctorate.

### Ageing and dance

As children, many of us attended dance schools offering ballet, stage and tap and both sexes had music and movement, country dancing or modern educational dance at school. During our youth we danced, whether ballroom, living or 60s/early 70s free-style dancing; now we are choosing to dance again. Dance is popularised by TV programmes, flash-mobs and community dance projects. BBC2's Imagine programme 'The Company of Elders' (2009) increased interest in older people's dance and subsequently more dance activities have emerged (Amans 2013). This is despite increasingly complex lives juggling responsibilities involving paid-work and/or volunteering, caring, increasing opportunities to travel and socialising. However most dance for older people is limited to line dancing, circle dancing and ballroom/tea-dancing. There are many community dance projects but most are short, involving limited dance development, often using contemporary, post-modern styles with walking, slow running with occasional gestures as content.

Adapting to changing attitudes is slow. Some dance organisations still believe older people can do the same as everyone else providing the choreographer adapts to compensate for what older people can no longer do (informal conversation with a leading outreach organiser, 2013). At one level this is reasonable; practitioners have a duty of care for everyone they work with and they bring their choreographic expertise. However, this mindset perceives a 'norm' for dance accommodating older people's perceived decline. The status quo remains the same, so is ageist. Choreographers/dance practitioners should be creating choreography that is in tune with people's older bodies, aspirations and desires. Increasing numbers of older people will not be satisfied with watered down versions of choreography that originates from ideas and training created for young bodies and from cultures now dominated by youthful consumerism and celebrity. Neither do they have the time nor ability to learn techniques, that take years to master, created for flexible, young bodies. What is required is choreography that is challenging, stimulating, encourages interaction and develops ageing dancers' skills, leading to enjoyable dance sessions and quality performances to each other and/or audiences.

Diane Amans (2013) rightly emphasises older people's individuality and them not being a homogeneous group. Her book includes information on current older people's dance activities and chapters on various health conditions and practical considerations. However, there is no clear message emphasising that older people ARE positively different from younger people because they have experience and have accumulated knowledge over longer time, have lived with their bodies longer and have acquired particular abilities that can only be achieved through time. I suggest we know our limitations. We are adaptable, having dealt with ever increasing changes whilst at work and bringing up families, including dealing with new technology. Some of us want to learn new dance skills and be creative and if given opportunities will participate wholeheartedly.



Older people's dance may include performance as an artistic contribution on its own terms which is aesthetically satisfying, interesting and inspiring. Active older people can join mainstream classes or projects if they wish but many of us prefer dancing in sessions focussed on our capabilities as we have different learning styles, memory retention and physical dexterity. Creative expression in the second half of life is not the exception but the rule and is universal in possibility; the baby boomers are going to demand more opportunities for personal development and empowerment. (Cohen 2000)

There is a place for Laban

Laban's principles of body, space, effort including flow can be incorporated into dancers' training and/or career development. Laban is a flexible framework which can be used in practical and theoretical contexts in addition to other techniques and styles practitioners learn (Smith-Autard, 2002). Just as modern educational dance was child-centred, I suggest that active older people's dance needs to be "older-people centred" starting from strengths and experience they have acquired and including development of potential. This can be enhanced by using different music, art forms and from a variety of dance techniques from Duncan to Hip-Hop. Styles from pure lyrical dance through to dance theatre can be developed that are spiritually, physically and socially satisfying. This pluralistic approach, moving on from post-modernism brings together process, performance and artistic opportunities echoing Smith-Autard's mid-way model for dance which encourages students to gain knowledge, understanding and dance skills through experience of a range of dance techniques and set movement principles such as Laban's. Dance in the post-modern era is more inclusive of different influences. It has widened boundaries to include the juxtaposition of different styles from Eastern, Africanist and other traditions, different art forms as well as individuals' ideas (Bales, 2008). It has become a 'compote', a mixture each maintaining some measure of its original colour with eclecticism being the distinguishing feature (Monten 2008).

Anna's address summed up Laban's diminishing influence:

"In retrospect with the dearth of Laban trained teachers and the emergence of a dance education world which has become highly eclectic with no coherent pedagogy, no common language ... an ethos has unfolded in which the understanding of movement, meaning, embodiment, spontaneity and creative intelligent action has become attenuated and etiolated"

Bales (2008) suggests the inclusion of Laban's work within programmes adds to the scholarly infrastructure which is lacking in the dance field and shifts the emphasis to bodily movement rather than representation. If these ideas are being regenerated for children and young dancers' education, then they are relevant for those working with older adults. We now we are different from our younger-selves and younger people today, often welcoming this. We have learned to cope with the complexities and subtleties of life, especially about relationships and skill acquisition (Cohen 2005). Many older people enjoy younger people's company, but sometimes refer learning with peers. We need dance facilitators who bring humour, challenges and enjoyment to our dance sessions.

Inwards!

We have devised this fuzzy logic task (Fourali 1997) and some possibilities where there is neither right nor wrong; each possibility is to "a greater or lesser extent" and can assist in clarifying the priorities of the class, organiser or choreographer.

The task - What is the challenge when providing older people's dance activities?

The possibilities:

- physically challenging so remaining youthful and healthy
- different techniques for learning contemporary styles
- increasing dance vocabulary with tasks encouraging individual and group contributions
- simple easy-to-remember movements in unison emphasising conformity
- choreography taken from everyday life e.g. walking, washing-up and reminiscence
- sessions have aims which culminate in performance
- choreographer's vision is paramount involving experimentation and changes
- choreography kept to lowest common denominator so everyone feels secure

Children, young people, vulnerable people and adults of all ages, including active older and frail, are being encouraged to dance and increasing numbers want to do so. Many active older people want dance activities that are mentally and physically challenging, friendly and enjoyable. Hopefully, older people dancing will become mainstream, purposeful and aesthetically acceptable. I believe that Laban has a place in the future, contributing positively to dance experiences in an increasingly complex world.

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- Jackie Richards is in her third year of a work-based doctorate (DProf) researching active older people participating in creative dance. She dances in Simona Scott's over-50s company "Counterpoint Dance" in London. She founded and manages "Creative Dance 60+" and its performance group "No Dance! No Joy!" a grassroots not-for-profit organisation in Tottenham, a diverse inner-city area in North London. Most of her career was at City & Guilds, an international vocational education awarding organisation. She can be contacted at jackie134@btopenworld.com*



# From couch to companionship

If you are serious about getting fitter, we've stumbled across an activity that could help ease the transition from slow-moving couch potato with the attendant aches and pains to a sparkling beacon of health.

If you are fed up with being alone and want to get off your couch and make some new friends, then here is your chance.

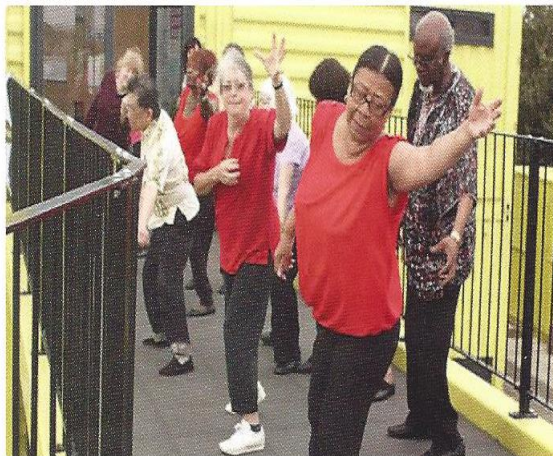
Creative Dance 60+ runs a dance class specially tailored to meet the needs of men and women, aged 50 and over, who want to improve their physical health and who enjoy dancing. Between 10 and 14 people attend the dance class each week – the oldest member is in her 80s.

"Classes are based on creative, contemporary dance," says Jackie Richards, founder and project manager of CD 60+. "This is an expressive and interpretive style of dance, so members use all parts of their bodies and dance alone and in groups. We dance to all types of music from reggae to classical to folk and you can move as little or as much as you like."

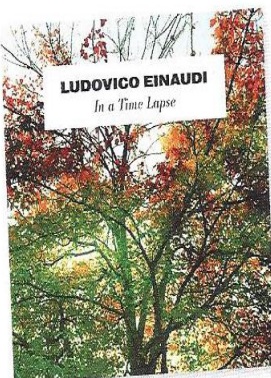
Creative Dance 60+ has just finished working on a dance called "All for One" which was set to a piece of music called *Experience* from the *In a Time Lapse* album by the Italian pianist and film score composer Ludovico Einaudi.

CD 60+ also has its own performance group called No Dance! No Joy! The group performs in and around the borough. It performed at The Willow School on Broadwater Farm and, recently, at the View Tube in the Olympic Park.

"Anyone can volunteer to perform in



*No Dance! No Joy! performing Dancing in the Air at the View Tube in the Olympic Park in July this year*



No Dance! No Joy! because performance pieces are practised during sessions," Jackie explains.

"One of the reasons we set this group up was to show the wider community just what older people are capable of achieving."

All classes are taught by dance artist and choreographer Molly Wright and sessions are held in the ground floor studio in Tottenham Green Leisure Centre on Wednesday mornings from 10.00

until 11.30am. Classes are supported by a Community Development Foundation grant so fees are £2.50 a session. No one is turned away.

→ For more information, visit [www.creativedance60.net](http://www.creativedance60.net). For information on Tottenham Green Leisure Centre, turn to our Local Services Index and look in the Tottenham Green section.

## The interviewees

The following are brief snapshots of the people who participated in the in-depth interviews. They complement Table 3 in chapter 3. As a group of random selected “active older people” these snapshots show the individuality of each interviewee, how lives vary as well as showing some similarities as each has competing demands, responsibilities and issues at this phase of their lives. A commonality is that they have chosen to dance in creative ways and attend dance sessions. However, there are other commonalities; several are in stages of transition having to face a number of new challenges including readjusting having recently left previous careers and jobs, changes in status because of bereavement or divorce or moving to new locations. Several are concerned about financial matters; some have health issues. Some have grand-parenting caring duties and others are facing life alone for the first time after many years.

These snapshots are not intended to give detailed descriptive studies but illustrate some key features of each person’s life. As a group of people I was surprised how much rich data they provided during their interviews. This enabled me to produce informative, meaningful research material. I analysed and incorporated their contributions into my findings and they influenced the findings and recommendations. I was able to use the in-depth interview research with other evidence from my work experiences using different research methods. I incorporated some interviewees’ quotes from transcriptions to make the research come alive with their voices as rich narrative, experiences and opinions. They provide new insights and knowledge.

The interviewees have their own life-course journey and unique view, how they perceive and live in their world. I have great respect for the way in which each person shared his or her life with me.

### Eliza

Eliza is at a stage of her life when she has a new focus doing something she enjoys which is dancing. ‘It is just for “me”’. She recognises that this might seem selfish but she is enjoying the new opportunity. She is filling her time with various dance activities and making new friends who have a common interest. Previously she had caring responsibilities for children and several older relatives. She danced when she was young and has returned to dancing. Her husband has his own interests and she sees her three grown up children occasionally.

### Bryony

Bryony is in transition having moved from France back to the UK. She is living in a SE England town in rented accommodation. She is settling down after a second divorce and in the processes of sorting out financial implications including selling

the home abroad. Once this has been achieved she will settle permanently. She is setting up a new business as she needs income. Family and friendships are important to her including being a grandparent. She is optimistic, thoughtful, sensible and pragmatic. She sees herself as fortunate having good health and positive relationships. Her creative dance activities during the last two years are a new experience for her as previously she only danced socially. She believes participating in creative dance has spurred her on to have the confidence to set up her new business. Once she sorts out her permanent home and becomes more settled financially she hopes to enjoy her life and continue to dance and perform.

## Belle

Belle is finding out more about herself since she started dancing. She has realised she does have choices; it is not a matter of either being retired or working. She realised she can enjoy doing local activities like being in Vivacity and make new friends with her neighbours which she could not do if she had remained totally work- oriented. She is a professional woman who thinks deeply and is well travelled. She is going through some personal psychological issues and finding her "new self" and a way to integrate her feelings more. She is thoughtful and has a way of living in the world that is strongly linked to her psychological/therapist perspective. She has a sense of humour that comes across during the interview and she recognises the benefits of getting to know other local people who come from different backgrounds from her own. Her main concerns focus on being financially secure and what will happen to her in the future as most of her family are abroad. She and her husband are adjusting to their 70s.

## Ken

Ken likes exploring, enjoys moving and arts generally. He takes advantage of being in London. His interest in dance and theatre began as a child and developed as a teenager and then as a young adult. At one stage, he was a performer and mime artist but gave this up to work to get a steady income and support family commitments. He is sociable but enjoys being a loner sometimes and he has some creative ideas to contribute and enjoys being part of a team. He is optimistic and likes exploring and taking on new opportunities including dancing and performing again.

## J1

J1 has had a settled home life as a child and as an adult. She has been married for 58 years and she and her husband continue to do things together. She lives at the city boundary on the edge of the countryside. Originally from the SE, she and her husband moved to the SW when they were young marrieds, because he was promoted. J1 worked until her first daughter was born, then never had paid work again. She gets out every day and has interests which she shares with her husband and some they do separately. She recognises she is slowing down and can no longer do three or four activities a day but she does an activity outside the home each day. She and her husband are well travelled including attending special interest trad-jazz holidays abroad. Dancing has been something the two of them have enjoyed together. He does not go to the creative dance class with her. She feels she is a very lucky person and is happy with her life. She has children

and grandchildren who live in another county and is keen to remain independent of them.

## Maria

Maria is a confident, friendly person who willingly speaks about her life and family. She has enjoyed dance throughout her life. Although in her eighties, she is getting out and meeting people and keeping active. Her family is very important to her and now involves several generations and she is in contact with them all. They are close but she cherishes her independence and is living on her own. She is making sure she gets out her house and is involved in a number of local community activities. She has a number of health and mobility issues but is determined to stay as active as she can and make the most of life. Jan's interview contains lots of wisdom and ideas about living positively and making the best of what you have.

## Penny

Penny is in transition. She recently located from a SW town to the county city. During her adult life she has had a responsible career and brought up a family but she has also had illness which made her give up her fulltime career. She is now a widow, her husband died a few years ago. Presently, she is not working but hopes to work again. She is coping with changes in her life that she had not expected and is in the process of exploring and finding new friends. She visited the Arts Centre as soon as she moved to the city. The first thing she did was join the dance group. She is also appreciative of the new friends she has made and respects the dance facilitator. Dance means a great deal to her.

## P1

P1 has danced in different ways since his teens. It was important to him when he immigrated to London as a young man from Singapore. The joy and importance of dancing bounces off the page of his transcription! He has a narrative and metaphor style that is in tune with his cultural background and as an educator. He is a sincere person. Dance means lots to him and so does his work running an after-school organisation to teach children maths. He is a caring person who is interested in learning and wants the world to be more tolerant. He is a family man and enjoys being part of his dance group.

## V1

V1 does as she likes and is responsible for herself. She has lots of friends and recognises that she can still do useful activities for others even though she has retired. However, the emphasis has changed as now her highest priority is what is useful to her rather what is useful to the community. V1 admits she is a worrier and sometimes sees the negative and she is sometimes cautious. She is dancing for the social aspects mostly and it is helping her to be more aware of her body and how she moves in space. She has some foot problems and dancing helps her have more confidence and she recognises the physical and social benefits.

## Toni

Toni is a people-oriented person who has worked hard all her life in a variety of jobs, often having several at the same time. She has a strong West Indian,

working class, feminist ethic and is a caring mother, grandmother and foster parent. Being financially secure is important to her. She has cared for a mother-in-law who died. Her work at a prison was more responsible and better paid than previous jobs she had and she worked with nurses who were role models and they boosted her self-esteem and confidence. She found retiring difficult at first because she had always expected to work until she died but she has got through that stage and realises she can still work but have time for interests and new opportunities. She and her second husband have sorted out their finances and she is enjoying a variety of new hobbies including creative dance and going on cruises which she loves. She is comfortable in herself and is learning how to relax.

## Yildas

Yildas is a kind, giving person and is very family-oriented and likes children. She has worked for a long time at the local primary school. She is a creative gardener and enjoys craftwork and supporting her family. She was shy before she started dancing and this has given her new confidence. She is concerned in a caring way about the future for young people not only her own grandchildren but for young people generally. She is happily married and looks forward to having more time and freedom to enjoy her life with her family and friends when she gives up her increasingly stressful work.

### **Vivacity Business Plan 2012-2014 and an alternative plan for a performance group.**

This Appendix includes

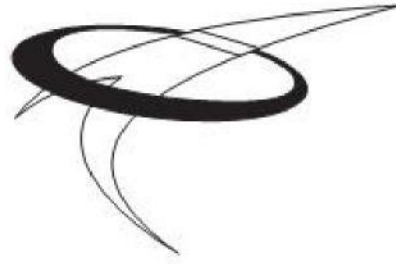
- The Third Business Plan which I prepared for seeking funding for Vivacity. It enabled me to reflect on progress to date as well as prepare for the future. It was a document for potential funders but also was used as a reflective tool to assess progress. The influence of my research and what I wanted to achieve are explicit within the business plan, demonstrating the reflexivity of my research and work as a reflective-practitioner.
- The alternative business plan is an appendix to the main plan outlining the development of a performing group as an extra activity. It could stand alone in its own right. It includes some summarises of some of the main plan sections.
- I used a similar template when devising a business plan following the Bridge Roundtables.

#### **Note**

Pseudonyms have been used for the real title of some organisations

The financial plan section in both plans includes the headings but not the actual figures because these could vary when applying to different potential funders.





**Vivacity**

# **Third Plan**

**2-year Business Development Plan**

**September 2012- July 2014**

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## Introduction

This is the third business development plan for Vivacity and builds on its success. We need support to focus quality dance provision for active older people with limited finances and continue to build links with others in innovative ways. This includes encouraging positive, active images of older people and how they relate to their local community.

One care worker said

***“We expect to work till we drop! Who thought I would be enjoying creative dance for myself and making new friends”.***

The first plan covered October 2010 - **March 2011 and was funded by Haringey’s “Making a Difference” grant. This established** Vivacity as a quality arts project in the West Green and Bruce Grove neighbourhood of Tottenham. An evaluation report was written on this project and demonstrated that there was a demand for creative dance activities and that people from a variety of backgrounds had participated and enjoyed the sessions and were keen to continue. The project culminated with a performance by Vivacity and Company A to an audience that included the Mayor and an invited audience. Everyone actively joined in and there was a celebration party afterwards.

The second plan covered May 2011 – July 2012. Vivacity was fortunate to obtain a grant from an **educationalist’s bequest. This was a stand-alone** grant for one year with an extension for 3 months. During this period open sessions have continued to attract local people and we were able to promote the organisation wider than the two neighbourhood wards. The intention to offer creative dance sessions to people who would not usually get involved in such arts activities and have needs concerning health and social inclusion has continued. There have been regular attendees as well as new people who are always welcomed. During the second phase we have built closer links with The Bernie Grant Arts Centre especially Studio 1 where we now hold sessions. Tavaziva Dance, the young professional dance company based at BGAC has shown interest in creative dance activities for active older people and there was a successful workshop led by their choreographer and in return the older dancers became an audience for their performance. We have also made links with a local primary school on the Broadwater Farm Estate. Vivacity led the bid for The Willow on Broadwaters and us to gain a BIGDANCE micro grant to create a performance – **“International Dance Olympiad on Broadwaters”.**

We are looking forward to continuing to offer our core activity of open sessions each term as well as developing innovative activities with other organisations. This third plan covers September 2012 – 2014.

## Description

Vivacity is a small community organisation with its own constitution, trustees and bank account. It was created by local older people to bring high standard creative dance activities to active older people aged 50 - 80+ in and around Tottenham. So far 45 people have attended and there is a core of approximately 20 who attend often and almost all people have asked to be on our mailing and email lists. It is a model of good practice with a welcoming approach and has built a community of local people who enjoy a common interest and support one another. This encourages better health, social cohesion, new friendships, creativity and wellbeing as well as promoting creative dance and enabling people to develop their dancing

capabilities. We all consider we are fortunate to have XXX as our teacher/choreographer.

Open sessions are held regularly each term and each session includes a warm up, developing dance skills and creating new dances/sequences and performing together. We also share events with other older dance groups and are initiating new innovative dance activities with a local primary school and with TAVAZIVA a young professional dance company. We were awarded a BIG DANCE micro-grant for “International Dance Olympiad on Broadwaters” We hope to develop these activities during the next two years as well as explore further innovative activities with others.

An open session approach is essential as it ensures participants attend whenever they are able, fitting around their other commitments and responsibilities. Sessions are held in a dance studio 1 at the Bernie Grant Arts Centre, our local professional performance space. This encourages older people to be part of the community and supports the local performance arts centre, encouraging older people to come along as audience and enjoy other activities on offer.

XXX, our experienced choreographer/teacher specialises in dance for active older people; she is highly motivating and encourages the best out of people especially those who have never danced before and those who wish to develop their dance skills. XXX has a specific inspirational approach and there has been artistic progress as the group develops. She encourages performances within sessions and is now developing Vivacity further so that those who wish can sometimes perform in external venues and festivals. However, we are not an exclusive performing group. We wish to continue offering inclusive, friendly and creative sessions which benefit all who attend.

## Vision

All active older people have opportunities to enhance their physical, social and mental wellbeing by participate in creative dance activities if they wish

## Aims

- To provide creative dance activities for active older people who come from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, who live in Tottenham and surrounding areas so they have the opportunity to take part in meaningful, purposeful dance activities that encourages health, friendships, develops creativity and an enjoyment of dance.
- To encourage active older people to become more confident and active and to promote better health and wellbeing, social cohesion and confident independence so becoming more active in their communities.
- To share good practice with others so that more dance and arts activities become widely available in the future at regional and national level and active of people have a positive image.

## Objectives

1. To provide regular creative dance open sessions for active older people who wish to explore and develop their dance abilities, participate in enjoyable, meaningful dance activities (**promoting dance and attendance**)
2. To provide high quality dance activities that will benefit active older people and meet their particular needs encouraging them to be creative, healthy and confident (**older people’s creativity and physical/mental health**)
3. To encourage, neighbourliness, friendship, social cohesion and local participation in the community (**social wellbeing and local participation**)

4. To provide activities for a diverse range of people so encouraging social engagement, where all feel they can actively contribute and progress. **(social diversity and participation)**
5. To encourage older people to become audiences for dance activities and participate in arts activities themselves **(developing audience and participation in arts activities)**
6. To encourage intergenerational creative dance activities so bringing younger and older people together in positive ways **(intergenerational activities/promote social cohesion)**
7. To participate in innovative creative activities with other arts organisations including sharing works in progress, developing new works and participating in workshops etc. **(sharing and creating with other arts organisations)**
8. To ensure there is sufficient funding available for sustaining Vivacity as it cannot be financially independent from fees alone, so ensuring that people in Tottenham have the chance to dance creatively. **(fundraising)**

### **Management and structure**

Vivacity has three trustees who live locally and ensure that the organisation meets the aims, objectives and outcomes of the constitution and works within budget. They are regular Vivacity attendees.

Jackie Richards founded Vivacity and is the manager and organiser. She is an experienced senior manager who until July 2008 worked at the City & Guilds of London Institute responsible for teams developing qualifications for Health & Social Care and Community Development sectors. She is also an older dancer. She has lived locally for over 30 years and has a history encouraging performance arts and has been involved with voluntary local community developments including creating a successful community choir and previously chairing the development of a community arts centre.

XXX is our Vivacity dance director/choreographer on a sessional contract. She is director of "Company A" an older people's dance company. She also teaches other older people dance classes.

The book keeping and governance advice is provided by Peter Richards who is an experienced senior manager and expert on governance for voluntary sector organisations.

All participants of Vivacity are encouraged to share ideas, make suggestions and feel part of the organisation.

Sessions are held in Studio 1, at the Bernie Grant Arts Centre. It is under the management of Creative Engagement, the director is XXX, a young entrepreneur and dancer.

### **Strategy to meet aims and objectives**

- To continue with our core open sessions welcoming all who wish to attend. (30 sessions a year)
- To continue to make contact with other organisations in the community and other arts organisations and join with them in new arts activities and projects and seek funding with them for particular projects
- To seek sufficient funding so that our core activities will be viable and we

can develop innovative dance opportunities.

- To promote and share our good practice with others

### **Priorities and highly desirable activities to meet objectives**

1. Open creative dance sessions which are inclusive, friendly, welcoming, develop confidence, skills and technique
2. Participate in arts activities that are meaningful and purposeful and innovative that encourage and promote social cohesion, wellbeing and active participation
3. Join other dance organisations in projects and innovative activities
4. Ensure that Vivacity continues to be a positive community of active older people who support one another and encourage positive activities

### **Marketing plan**

#### **The beneficiaries of our project 2012 - 2014**

##### **Local people who benefit**

- Active older people from different cultural and social backgrounds living in Tottenham or nearby
- Carers – with responsibilities for partners, adult disabled children, grandchildren, other relatives or neighbours
- people with ill-health including arthritis, high blood pressure, mental health issues, weight issues etc.
- People leaving fulltime work or working part time readjusting to a new phase of life, reconnecting to the neighbourhood
- People with family abroad, away for extended time
- Isolated, lonely people and those recently bereaved.
- People who have never had opportunities be creative and express themselves

##### **Other dancers and local school**

- Other older dancers, friends and family members attending “work in progress” events and performances and dancing in our dance studio. Vivacity hopes to get involved with local regional festivals and other dance events for those who wish to perform and to share good practice
- Local school(s) and young people provision

##### **Professional Choreographers and arts centre**

- XXX our dance director develops her expertise and career as a choreographer and teacher.
- Tavaziva Dance Company choreographer and company
- Creative Engagement – dance studio space
- Bernie Grant Arts Centre by supporting the café and encouraging attendance at events. In future it might be possible to join in with projects they co-ordinate.

##### **Others**

- Local community especially those with stereotypical views about

- older people's capabilities
- Relatives of participants who are delighted their loved ones are involved in a positive life enhancing activity
- Local politicians and community leaders
- Wider dance world and other dance organisations

## **Trends**

Vivacity has now established itself as a local dance organisation. It wishes to continue offering accessible open sessions and continue to offer opportunities for active older people to get involved in dance.

There is increasing interest in performing arts activities for older people and especially performance arts which encourages physical, mental and social benefits. Vivacity is well placed to get involved with these new trends.

## **Promotion**

There is a successful and engaging website

[www.creativedance60.net](http://www.creativedance60.net) Local promotion through the following:

- Posters - promotional display cards, small cards and business cards.
- Press and websites – local and regional
- XXX – through her website and contacts
- Jackie through attendance at seminars and conferences

## Financial plans

The following plan covers the basic financial components needed to cover the costs of running Vivacity during September 2012 - 2014

### Income:

### Fees:

£2.50 a session.

Based on average of 10 people attending  
30 sessions a year

£00x30x2                      00

### Expenditure

Studio 1 including VAT  
£X a session  
30 sessions a year                      £00 x30x2                      00

Dance Director  
£X a session  
30 sessions a year                      £00 x 30x2                      00

Management and administration                      £00x2                      00

Insurance                      £00x2                      00

Marketing and promotion

Website                      £00x2                      00

Promotional materials and photography                      £00                      00

Stationery and printing                      00x2                      00

Refreshments and celebrations etc.                      00x2                      00

Music and props                      00x2                      00

Contingency                      00x2                      00

**Total:                      000 =                      £0000**

Vivacity hopes to join with others for specific projects and separate funding will be sought in partnership.



## Fundraising plan

Vivacity is a high-quality project in a less advantaged part of London and it would be impossible to run our sessions without financial support (see financial plan). As we are doing a form of dance that is not routine and we want all participants to be involved the maximum numbers in any session is 16 and most sessions average between 8-12 people. The studio also limits the numbers who are involved in any session. For the first two phases, we received our funding from Haringey "Making a Difference Grant" and then a one-off grant from a bequest from an educationist as well as fees from participants.

We have applied for grants approaching the Lottery Fund "Awards for All", The Arts Council and the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation which have not been successful. There has been very positive feedback about our dance activities, management and our achievements. The reason for not successfully gaining a grant is because we need core funding to run open sessions and we are already established.

Jackie is now proceeding to seek advice from the sports and leisure team at Haringey Council and hopes they can assist and advise about getting core funding. At a recent meeting with XXX at the Arts Council on May 10<sup>th</sup> 2012 the officer confirmed that our project is inspirational and sustainable but not suitable for their funding regime because it is not art-led. She suggests that for funding purposes, it might be better to go through "Health & Arts" routes which are being set up at local level. There might be some monies available following the recent riots.

Sponsors could be approached but this is very time consuming and Vivacity does not have personnel available to fundraise extensively. In the current climate, more priority is being given to getting people, especially young people, into employment, or keeping people in employment or enabling the frail to stay out of residential care. However, there could be some sponsors supportive of arts activities who are interested in giving active older people choices and ensuring they have healthy, social lives. Jackie is prepared, if necessary, to spend a limited amount of time seeking sponsors.

We need to secure funding for at least the year 2012 – 2013 before September 2012 but ideally, we want to sustain our work for two years.

If we do not secure funding, we will have no choice but to cease operating.

We hope that we will find sufficient funding so we can not only run our sessions but continue to explore innovative activities with other organisations. This will involve being partners with others and seeking grants and funding for specific projects.

- Set up meeting with Sports and Leisure and/or Cultural officers at Haringey Council asap and explore ways to obtain core funding from May 2012 onwards
- Contact possible sponsors to secure funding - (limited time available)
- Vivacity to continue from autumn 2012 if core funding has been secured.
-

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Outcomes/How to achieve this</b>	<b>How to evaluate if achieved</b>
1. To provide regular creative dance open sessions for active older people who wish to explore and develop their dance abilities, participate in enjoyable, meaningful dance activities	10 sessions, 3 terms a year  Appropriate and interesting choreography and development of creative dance skills	Conversations weekly Questionnaires Keeping register of attendees – average attendance = at least 8 people per session  Good choreography and participation
2. To provide high quality dance activities that will benefit active older people and meet their particular needs encouraging them to be creative, healthy and confident	Participation in sequences that enable active older people to develop their confidence and wellbeing and developing their dance technique and creative potential.	People have enjoyed sessions, improved their memory, physical and health benefits, and made new friends. This is monitored and evaluated through conversations and questionnaires
3. To encourage, neighbourliness, friendship, social cohesion and local participation in the community	Attendance reflects the diversity of Tottenham and people are welcomed and want to become involved	Sessions have attracted on average between 8-12 people from a variety of backgrounds New friendships and support have been sustained
4. To provide activities for a diverse range of people so encouraging social engagement, Vivacity activities where all feel they can actively contribute and progress.	To perform within sessions and invite other dance groups to “share work in progress”  XXX to provide interesting dance experiences which everyone enjoys and attendees have to opportunity to share ideas and dance together	Individual and group dances created to encourage people to dance together and develop their dance capabilities  Those who wished to participate in external performance activities have had the opportunity to do so and have benefitted from it
5. To encourage older people to become audiences for dance activities and actively participate in arts activities themselves	To encourage links with arts activities within BGAC and other local theatres and organisations beyond	Increased interest in arts activities and attendance at events
6. To encourage intergenerational creative dance activities so bringing younger and older people together.	To continue to develop links with The Willow school and other organisations involved with young people	Workshops and intergenerational activities have been successful and enjoyed by all involved

7. To participate in innovative creative activities with other arts organisations sharing works in progress, developing new works, workshops etc	To continue to develop innovative activities and join in with other dance and performing arts activities.	Vivacity involved in innovative activities with others including workshops, festivals and sharing works in progress
8. To ensure there is sufficient funding available for sustaining Vivacity	To secure sufficient funding for core arts activities To partner with others to obtain funding for particular projects	The organisation is well managed and finances have been used effectively and efficiently.

## Outcomes, evaluation criteria and risks

### Risk Analysis

Risk	Risk Level L-H 1 - 5	Likelihood L-H 1-5	How to reduce risk
Not getting funding	4	3	The project could not continue if there was not a grant. If there was not sufficient grant, time would have to be taken to find funding or the organisation will have no choice but to end.
XXX cannot attend all sessions	2	1-2	XXX has shown commitment but her contract will ask her to send an alternate if she is unable to attend herself.
Do not attract sufficient participants	1	1	Ensure promotion is targeted correctly, people who show interest are welcomed to participate and progress and enjoy sessions. Involve relevant organisations
Not enough dance performance created	2	1	Motivate members, join forces with other performance organisations (either intergenerational or for older people). Confirm venue and distribute tickets
Involvement with other organisations	3	1	Build upon existing innovative activities and contacts

## Appendix xx SWOT

### Strengths

- Diversity
- High quality activities, venue and choreographer
- Enthusiasm for dance
- Welcoming, friendly approach
- Impact on lives
- Inclusivity
- Fun
- improved health, physical, social and mental wellbeing
- Evaluation after first project
- Track record of successes
- Relationships with other dance organisations

### Weaknesses

- Open sessions so different people attending
- Small local organisation without support
- Well written grant applications have not been successful

### Vivacity

### Opportunities

- Building on previous successes
- Continue to develop relationship with TAVAZIVA Dance, BGAC, Creative Engagement
- Continue to develop relationship and work with The Willow on Broadwaters
- Develop new working relationships with other dance organisations and performing arts organisations
- Share best practice with others
- Increasing interest in Arts and health

### Threats

- No funding available or too difficult to find so not secured
- Interest is not sustained
- Financial climate
- Active older people are not the highest priority at times of austerity

## **Appendix xx Summary of achievements from September 2010**

- 5 -15 dancers at each session, 45 involved and new people welcome
- Progress developing dance skills and bringing own expression and interpretation
- XXX's development and input into the success of Vivacity
- Fees kept £2.50 each session, so affordable and allows accessibility
- Kept within budget, finances well managed, monitored and recorded
- Workable constitution and regular trustees' meetings
- Well received evaluation report at the end of the first project.
- Informative website and attractive promotional materials
- Interest has been sustained and there are regular attendees. Almost all who no longer attend have become supporters, friends and ambassadors.
- Other organisations have shown interest to be involved with us.
- "Sharing work" with other older people, friends and Mayor
- An intergenerational workshop at Willow primary school on Broadwaters
- Being awarded a BIG DANCE micro-grant - preparation in place for "International Dance Olympiad on Broadwaters" which will be held on July 6th
- March 2012 Successful workshop led by professional TAVAZIVA Dance Company's choreographer. Participants became part of audience for Tavaziva's performance at BGAC. Excellent relationships built and can be developed further.
- Innovative possibilities for the future

### **An alternative business development plan.**

**(This can stand alone but can also be included as part of the main plan).**

### **Active older people dance group for Tottenham.**

**Summary** As it might not be possible to obtain a £ grant an alternative business plan has been developed. This involves maintaining open sessions for all and developing a local performance dance group. The potential group has the working

title “XXX”. This plan would require a minimum of £ for one year; all management and administration would be on a voluntary basis, a less experienced dance director appointed and a lesser fee negotiated for the dance studio. The aims and innovations, strategy, and outcomes would be similar to the main plan. However, there are benefits for Vivacity if it has a dance group which could promote health, wellbeing and positive images of older people locally.

**The plan** Building on previous success, Vivacity a local small not-for-profit organisation offering creative dance sessions to local people aged 55-80+ from diverse backgrounds and some intergenerational dance activities, wishes to create a performance/workshop group which could perform in local schools, residential homes, and local festivals/events. Regular open sessions will develop dance ability and provide opportunities for making friends and gaining health benefits, enabling older people to attend whenever they can as many have competing demands in their lives. During sessions, new sequences will be

created for intrinsic satisfaction and for building the performance group’s repertoire. Some participants will choose to perform publicly so contributing to community activities and creating positive images of active older people.

This project addresses public health issues: social isolation, physical and mental health issues and social cohesion.

### **Reasons for supporting a Vivacity performing group**

- There are few creative dance groups in London or nationally offering quality creative dance activities. Vivacity attracts older people from diverse backgrounds; especially those who come from less advantaged backgrounds.
- Vivacity is innovative, successfully encouraging dance and more positive images of older people and giving them choices about the type of dance they do.
- Being part of a performing dance group will bring people together to learn and share ideas and take the message to others in the community.
- Developing our links with other local organisations, making sure older people are seen as contributing positively in our community, participating in activities across the generations. This includes building on previous successful intergenerational work with children from the local primary School on and our links with XXX our local professional dance company.
- Vivacity has a welcoming environment where everyone is given respect and encouragement to succeed and enjoy themselves.
- People can seek new friendships, including those who are bereaved, have been seriously ill, have caring responsibilities or are making the transition following fulltime work or family leaving home.

This project will continue to offer essential open dance sessions for existing and new people where they will increase their confidence to dance and then move

on to performing publicly if they wish and so a dance group will be created.

### **Who will be involved?**

- We estimate (based on previous experience) our open sessions will attract up to 30 active older people (new and existing) with average attendance between 8-12 people at any session.
- We estimate that we can aim for about 10 dancers will volunteer to be in the performance group (Based on discussion with some present Vivacity dancers)
- The manager has the overall responsibility for the project; she will do management and admin including liaison.
- Other volunteers: bookkeeper and trustees, Photographer – one of the trustees
- Numerous people will benefit and be involved in our performances/workshops as audiences or participants.

**What are the key benefits?**

- Get older people more involved in dance activities and being creative encourages them to have better health, be active, make new friends and enjoy life.
- Making links within the community and performing in/with local schools, residential homes, youth projects, doctors' surgeries. Vivacity could perform in local festivals, encouraging greater understanding and respect for each other
- Promoting activities across generations and making sure older people can be active members of the community
- Encouraging older people, who are in a new liberated time of their lives but have responsibilities and needs, to participate in dance and meet others with similar commitment.
- Raising the spirits and fun within our neighbourhood and helping neighbours to know one another.



### **Estimated expenditure**

**Choreographer(s)/teachers 30 sessions @ £ = £**

**(Including attendance at performances)**

**Dance Venue 30 sessions @ £ = £**

**Music Props costumes = £**

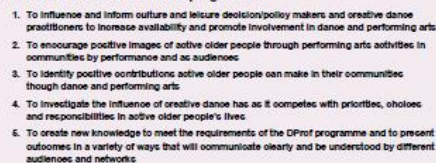
**Promotion and publicity = £**

**Postage, printing etc. = £**

**Refreshments, celebrations etc. = £**

**Total: £**

**Poster:  
Middlesex University  
Post Graduate  
Summer Conference 2013**



1. What experiences do active older people gain from becoming involved in creative dance?
2. What meaning do they give to their dancing?
3. How can sharing interests in similar phases of life enhance wellbeing, practice and image?
4. How can sessions be structured to create the best environment for encouraging inclusion?



My evolving work and interests are multidisciplinary and wide-ranging and most of the literary review has taken me to new subject and disciplinary areas. Increasingly I have needed to try and control the boundaries of my varied work, seek research, research methods and still find the energy for

- rehearsing and performing in an older people's dance company,
- managing a local dance organisation and performance group I founded
- participating in other work opportunities as they emerge
- family responsibilities
- thinking, researching and writing my DProT

- i Phenomenological questioning and hermeneutic interpretation, and analysing to draw out themes based on in-depth semi-structured interviews with up to 15 active older dancers and 5 leading practitioners
- ii On-line survey to gather some quantitative data using identified themes and involving a larger number of older dancers
- iii Desk research

In the following months, I was not totally satisfied because my chosen research would enhance my work, take account of my positionality but not include my actual work. I wanted the challenge of reflecting on my evolving work and to benefit from the new learning and opportunities I was experiencing. After much angst and thinking, I finally decided to continue with a mixed-methods approach, using the methods mentioned above including interpretative phenomenological analysis. I would extend my research to include methods to gather evidence and data to gain understanding of my actual work from everyday life (Silverman, D.2007). I am an insider research practitioner as well as an outsider. I could use a variety of methods including aspects of

- 1 Participant observation, ethnography,
- 2 Case study, narrative,
- 3 Live evidence/literature
- 4 Desk research.

[illegible]

Individual      Dance      Community/National      Image & Change



Work Based activities: Leadership, management, creating organisations, welcoming approach, Best Practice, Grassroots upwards, Boundary spanning, Community Affairs, Funding Applications, CDRs, presenter, adviser, live/online and self-referencing, Role model, researcher, champion for other people, other sectors, performing, intergenerational activities

[illegible]

There is still a long way to go but I think I will meet the challenge and I am aiming to submit my final DProF project and reflections in December 2014. I am in the process of completing my interviews and analysing data. I have begun writing drafts for my final submission. There is a lot to do and I have to ensure it does not become overwhelming and out of control but remains a challenge interesting and achievable. I have gained confidence and am on my way.

### Case Study Protocol

#### **“When I’m 64 I Want to Dance – active older people participating in Creative Dance”**

##### **Overview**

This is the protocol for an exploratory case study about active older people participating in creative dance that I am undertaking as the research project for my DProf programme. I wish to explore this social phenomenon “case” because it is of growing interest in the health and arts world and political decision making as well as the work activity I have been involved in during the last five years since leaving my fulltime career. I decided to leave my fulltime career at 60 years old because I wanted to return to dance and become more involved in my local community. This case study focusses on creative dance and this is the “window” for the research. However, the case study is about giving active older people choices so that they can develop their abilities and take part in creative activities and become active members of their communities enabling them to pursue meaningful and purposeful lives. Therefore, it is about opportunities, choices and community development at a time of social change when there are increasing numbers of active older people and the potential for more arts activities at a time of austerity and cuts in many government departments and solutions to new problems and issues have to be found.

##### **Mission**

To contribute towards active older people having more choices within dance so that they can develop new skills and friendships, be actively participating in their communities and enjoy wellbeing. To inform and influence policy-makers and decision makers so that dance and other participatory arts activities will be more available within communities

Title “When I’m 64 I want to Dance” active older people participating in Creative Dance

Definitions (already drafted see terms)

Active older people -

Want to dance –

Creative Dance –

Participation -

##### **Goals**

- To contribute towards increasing participation of active older people in creative dance and recognition that all people can dance if they wish whatever their age or condition
- To create new knowledge that identifies themes and contributes to community development, social cohesion and participatory arts especially creative dance
- To disseminate and influence information and practice to decision makers and policy makers and other interested parties

- To demonstrate that people from different backgrounds can dance together in positive ways and be creative so encouraging social cohesion

## **Stakeholder and audience interests**

As before amending as needed

## **Rationale for selecting the case study**

I have had an evolving methodological approach which will be critically written up within the research report. I did not start with a case study approach in mind. At the writing up stage for my DProf, I decided that a case study methodological approach would pull my varied research together to form an exemplary case study research project report. I formulated this protocol prior to bringing the various research findings and analyses together so it will be a helpful framework and instrument as I develop my analysis, findings and recommendations. I will use the research I have conducted to date and this methodological approach will enable me to produce a research report that will be coherent, purposeful and fit-for-purpose. There are different aspects of inquiry that inform the case study

- Voices of active older dancers – their thoughts, meanings and aspirations and from leading practitioners who are interested in promoting more dance activities for active older people
- Illustrations from real life activity within Vivacity the organisation that I created and manage – a grassroots not-for-profit organisation with a successful, innovative track record and process for providing dance activity in a local area
- Committee, seminar and other disseminating and influencing work to promote and champion active older people and dance
- My own experience as an older person and older dancer
- Other work that promotes positive images and attitudes towards older people
- Desk-top research and findings from different sources

## **Theoretical reasons and propositions for the case-study**

- There is an ageing population and demographic change
- Many active older people will want to dance as they enjoyed dancing when they were young and wish to return to dancing at this stage of their lives or they have dreamt about dancing and this is a chance to get involved
- There are new developmental ideas backed by neuroscience that show people's brains continue to develop and become more creative during the second stage of life
- Government and policy makers need to think of new ways to deal with changes in society including an ageing population and continuing austerity.
- The media are having to readjust stereotypes and negative images of older people
- The benefits and links between health, arts and wellbeing
- Increased opportunities for more art activities for all including dance being an art-form for all ages

## **Key Readings, Literature research, live evidence from various sources**

The case study will be informed by key readings and theory as well as a growing number of reports and research projects

This includes topics such as:

Connectedness and Spirituality

Age, Ageism, Life-Course

Developmental stages in later life, creativity and neuroscience findings

Positive images of older people

Dance in the community

Embodiment, the body and dance

Public Health and Arts

See Venn Diagrams

A variety of live evidence will be collected – programmes, videos, pics etc

A data base will be kept that supports the case study research.

## **The role of this protocol as a guide**

This protocol will guide my work so that I can coherently bring together the varied aspects of my research so meeting the requirements of my research report; fulfil the outcomes of Level 8 descriptors for my DProf as well as creating a case study which combines my varied aspects of work and other inquiries. It builds and enhances my evolving methodology which I presented at the summer conference 2014 which included the way in which my ideas and work have developed during the DProf process. It will ensure that my research report has construct validity and reliability, transparency, robustness, and clarity and the process to bring my extensive work together so it will not be too overwhelming and will give me boundaries.

## **The theoretical framework for the case study.**

This protocol will ensure that my case study is produced within a logical model that takes into account the various aspects of my research and the methods used to collect and analyse data and make recommendations. It will also assist with incorporating clear reflections and critical approaches that I have used and will be using to write up my research report. Yin (2014) "Case Study Research" has informed my Case Study thinking and activities.

It will act as a standardised agenda for my research inquiry especially bringing together the various aspects of research I have undertaken, analysing, synthesising and writing up my research report.

## **Data Collection Procedures**

All of the Case Study research work will be carried out by me alone. I do have some critical friends who comment and advise if I seek their advice.

## **Procedures for protecting people**

I will be working within ethical and professional practices that complement my values and beliefs

These will cover all aspects of interviewing, analysing, writing etc.

## **Identification of likely sources of data**

This will include how I have access to active older people who are choosing to dance and some leading practitioners and why/how I chose those I interviewed

Creative Dance 60+ processes, procedures and development

My own experiences as an older person and one who is dancing in performance companies, attending dance classes and participating in dance projects and being a film extra with access to young film-makers

My work experience within committees, advisory groups and attendance at conferences and seminars

## **Data collection plan**

This complete list and plan time-table has been completed and can be incorporated with full explanation and methods used.

## **Data collection questions**

### **The specific Case Study question**

Why do active older people choose to participate in creative dance and how does this bring benefits and what are the implications?

Sub-set questions are included in the question I have produced and they guide the case study findings and analysis.

## **Practice**

There is increasing interest from growing numbers of active older people to participate in dance activities since the TV programme about the Company of Elders (2009). Gradually more activities are being provided around the UK but this is still patchy. There is increased interest from various government departments and other organisations about demographic changes and the effects this will have in the future. This includes finding new ways to deal with social and financial issues so that relevant new ways can be developed to deal with health and social issues and social cohesion. My case study contributes to these debates especially about the role of arts activities and public health, new ways of living now that "retirement" in the old sense is disappearing and people are living longer, healthier lives.

### **The nature of collaborative efforts to put the practice into place**

I will be using my own experiences, as well as desk research, ways creative/contemporary dance activities are becoming more available. I have participated in some new initiatives: new aop provision, Age Action Alliance, Haringey Dance Forum, Bridge Research and Development, Rambert, Sadlers Wells, Capital Age Festival, Big Dance etc

### **How did the idea of the practice start?**

The research grew out of my own life experience. When I left work at 60 I wanted to return to dance and get involved in my local community. I started attending dance classes and I started a local choir and then set up Vivacity. I had the opportunity to join the Middlesex University DProf programme and my research proposal developed after I had carried out an initial literature review and had an idea what my work was going to be. The accepted proposal developed over time as I carried out my interviewing and developed my understanding about methodology and research methods. When I began considering how to analyse and bring together my data from my varied sources it was difficult to bring it

together as a coherent whole. It was at this point I decided to explore the possibility of using a case study methodology so that I could produce a coherent, well-written and robust research project.

### **The planning process**

This is the evolving time-line and research methodology- this is documented and can be amended as necessary.

### **Funding**

I am self-funded. This means that the case study has boundaries for me as an older person who is dancing and exploring topics from this perspective with access to others who are choosing to dance. There is not much research of this kind at the moment about the case study topic. It therefore is being developed at the right time and although it is relatively small-scale it is influential because of my positionality and the skills and work experience I am bringing to the research.

### **Evaluation of the innovative practice**

I will be evaluating the data and making recommendations. The design will meet the requirements of the DProf level descriptors and will include reflection on practice, consideration of literature and live evidence and incorporating the various data from the different aspects of inquiry. Recommendations will be made based on the analysis and findings that will emerge during the case study.

### **Guide for the Case Study Report**

#### **Audience for report and stylistic preferences**

The project report is written for the assessment board of the DProf and will meet the requirements to reach Level 8 descriptors. It will be written in an accessible, straightforward manner which demonstrates my academic abilities as well as succinct writing style. The audience will also be some decision/policy makers and dance practitioners and anyone else who chooses to read my doctorate.

#### **Ethical practices in operation**

I will ensure that all necessary ethical practices will be carried out whilst completing the report. This will include using data honestly, keeping confidentiality etc.

#### **Innovations of the practice**

The report will include my findings and recommendations within the real-world context and the literature review I have carried out during the development of the research project. I will attempt to interpret my data and findings to find new innovations of practice found because of the exploratory nature of the case study as well as to triangulate my findings with other research and reports that have explored or are exploring similar topics.



## **Outcomes of the practice to date**

At the time of writing this case study protocol Vivacity is a successful grassroots organisation and has just secured another CDF grant and is managed successfully offering quality dance sessions and has a successful performing group.

I have been invited to co-chair a DWP/Age Action Alliance theme group and to present at other theme groups. I am also involved in a number of other committees and organisations concerning active older people provision.

I am dancing in three dance companies/ projects and will be dancing in two performances at the Sadlers Wells Elixir International Older Dance International Festival

All the above will inform and enhance the case study report.

## **Chapters for the report**

The chapters for the report will emerge as the data collection, analyse and findings emerge. At this time, I think there will be an introduction, a chapter incorporating literature review processes and main topics, description and purpose about the various aspects of inquiry; the context and scope of the case study, a methodology and methods, project activity, findings and recommendations and looking forward. There will also be a reflection chapter on the whole process.

## **History pertaining to the practice**

My own life history, work experience and my interests underpins and informs the case study

There will be a brief history about the development of dance, especially creative/contemporary dance which will place active older dance in a context of dance as an art form that bridges arts/culture and exercise, lifestyle and health/social care.

## **Appendices**

There will be a limited number of appendices

## **Bibliography**

A reference list and bibliography will be included

### Dance Structures and Networks

This appendix gives underpinning knowledge for F6 showing the complexity of dance organisations and networks and the way in which collaborating and joint working is becoming more important.

There are many ways dance activities can be organised. (see F6)

Older people dance performance companies are located in some cities including Plymouth, Liverpool, Cardiff, Brighton, Ipswich and in parts of London. Provision is patchy and not accessible to all who might wish to perform. This builds upon pioneering work such as Fergus Early's Green Candle company and Sadler's Wells outreach classes and Company of Elders. (see F9)

In Central London, dance organisations such as Rambert, Trinity Laban Conservatoire, Sadler's Wells and Claremont Project offer sessions for over 50+ and other London Dance Hubs have supported older dancers' initiatives or are proposing to do so from 2016. Rambert has a waiting list for Mercury Movers sessions. Since 2013, The Place has successfully offered a week-long intensive summer older dancers' course. The course is challenging with excellent tuition. Regular dance sessions for older people might be offered in future.

Community Dance practitioners have offered dance for over 30 years. Thomson (2008) suggests the ethos underlying the dance sessions were primarily to provide social activities uniting creativity and physicality, offering experiences of being valued and belonging, to learn and develop abilities to trust and be trusted. Many community dance projects are short term and end once obligations and goals are achieved and funding ceases. There is no personal development after the project ends. Dance does not become integrated into participants' lives. These community dance projects often aligned with a particular social philosophy such as a means to achieve certain social and political goals (2.8.2). These are changing because social/political and financial contexts are different in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Dance and keeping people engaged in their communities, is now recognised as beneficial for individuals and society. There is an ageing population, financial constraints and

increasing pressure on the NHS. The FCD changed its name to “People Dancing” in late 2014 which reflects its wish to develop in keeping with its aims and philosophy. It is evolving to meet different expectations and changing attitudes in society. It is making links with other parts of the dance world and other relevant sectors, and continues to offer a range of services to its members.

Different organisations and networks are forming. My project began when older people’s dance was mainly for those deemed “retired” “marginalised” and/or “vulnerable, old and frail.” These attitudes are changing and networking and boundary spanning activities are becoming more common as this report shows.

In other sectors, joint-working has occurred. My experience at City & Guilds, working with different professions allied to medicine, provides a good illustration. Professionals came together so they could be officially recognised and taken seriously by the NHS and Government departments. They wanted to be credible to the public and gain more funding for training. One example is aromatherapy. Scientists researching the potential benefits of herbs dialogued with NHS practitioners, aroma therapists and owners of beauty salons to develop National Occupational Standards (NOS). They managed to produce competences for all levels of aromatherapy practice. Similar joint-working occurred for acupuncture, chiro-practice and other therapies.

Similar joint working is happening in the dance world. In December 2015 and in April 2016, One Dance UK, a new lead body for dance, was launched bringing together Association of Dance of the African Diaspora (ADAD), Dance UK, National Dance Teachers Association (NDTA) and Youth Dance England (YDE) as a “one-stop-shop” for the dance sector. It provides services for young people dancing, teachers and training institutions, professional dancers, choreographers, companies and producers. It was created to provide a single powerful voice for dance, and provide a central knowledge hub, professional development and performance platforms to nurture talent, and strategic initiatives that will benefit the entire dance sector [www.onedanceuk.org](http://www.onedanceuk.org). However, older people’s dance or addressing the challenges of demographic change was not included within its first three years’ priorities. People Dancing - The FCD [www.communitydance.org.uk](http://www.communitydance.org.uk) worked closely with the Dance Training and Accreditation Partnership (DTAP) to

create dance leadership NOS. People Dancing is maintaining its independence as a dance development and membership body for those involved in creating dance for people. They are changing and evolving (see 2.8.2 and above). These organisations involve networks of organisations and individuals. It is complex because different parts of the dance world include cultural and media arts, community dance and independent dance teachers need to collaborate more closely if dance is to be promoted, obtain more resources and grow a well-trained workforce. There is huge potential for older people's dance in a variety of forms because of the aging population living longer and many older people having disposable income and wanting to dance. Different dance networks need to collaborate with professionals from different sectors such as NHS and health, social work, sports and leisure, arts and culture, Public Health, Social Work and academia from different disciplines. These relationships are developing, such as the London Arts in Health Forum [www.lahf.org.uk/](http://www.lahf.org.uk/) and various Age Action Alliance working groups encouraging boundary spanning activities. Skills Active UK [www.skillsactive.com](http://www.skillsactive.com) the industry lead body for Sports or Leisure Industries, offers Exercise to Music qualifications providing training for instructors, many of whom in future will offer dance sessions for older dancers. Some of these instructors/facilitators (for example many trained by the Keep Fit Association) will have a Laban background and so sessions might be dance-like rather than sports oriented.

Different organisations and networks have particular values and philosophies, training programmes, history and traditions. Professional bodies, theatres and arts organisations, university academics, training providers, national/regional agencies, grassroots organisations and independent dance-artists and dance teachers work within, through and outside of the commercial, public and voluntary sectors. This complexity allows for a vibrant dance world but it can also be disadvantageous because Dance is often not given sufficient resources and recognition and falls through nets (see F10)

The Royal Academy of Dance [www.rad.org.uk](http://www.rad.org.uk), following their pilot on older people's dance (See F2) are accrediting teachers to work with older people, providing career development to meet potential demand. Another organisation promoting older people's arts including dance is AESOP <http://www.ae-sop.org>, a

social enterprise, working with Canterbury Christ Church University's Faculty of Health and Wellbeing. They have identified a gap in provision and offer continuing professional development. They have conducted a pilot to train dance-artists to incorporate exercises into dance sessions that enhances health, for example fall prevention. Green Candle also runs courses about facilitating older people's sessions.

Dance development agencies around England and the UK are supported by the Arts Council and other funders/sponsors. Each has its own identity and meets local or regional needs. The Arts Council

*"believe dance plays a key part in contemporary culture; it covers a wide range of aesthetics and styles and takes place in a wide range of settings". Since 2014 new funding has been available to widen the understanding and appreciation of various kinds of dance, influenced by the social and demographic richness of British society".*

[www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

This funding for new dance activities includes older people's dance company projects. For example:

- Three Score Dance in Brighton;
- Greenwich Dance Agency offers older people, drop-in technique and creative dance sessions for 55+ each week as "Dancing to the Music of Time" as well as Flashmobs and tea-dances;
- Yorkshire Dance in September 2015 launched "Young at Arts" (as part of the Time To Shine, a 6-year programme funded through Big Lottery Ageing Better) which is hoping to tackle isolation in the City by appointing older people ambassadors to seek out and encourage isolated people to become involved in dance.

There is a National Dance Network which includes national and regional dance agencies and other organisations. Dance activities also take place in commercial gyms and leisure centres some of these are part of international and national chains and as shown in the Preface can offer dance sessions for older people. Some are popular, offering Zumba Gold, Salsa, line-dancing and aerobic exercise

for older people. The voluntary sector offers dance for older people including local Age UK centres. Organisations such as The City Lit and others mentioned above in London and in arts centres and church halls around the UK such as the one in the South West where Hazel offers sessions. Local NHS hospitals and doctors' general practices are increasingly interested in dance activities for older people especially for fall prevention, dementia, mental health issues and Parkinson's and sometimes patients are given prescriptions to attend dance sessions.

Individual dance-artists facilitate dance sessions in venues either working on behalf of the organisation or as freelancers. They can apply for funding and some collaborate with other local organisations whilst others work in isolation. Different dance networks around the country are being set up. Sadler's Wells Elixir Festival and conferences initiated by Dance East are offering older people's dance groups and companies performance opportunities. It is early days whether these might lead to further networks being formed.

F6 has given an analysis of the developing range of active older people's dance including "creative dance" and the complex structures and networks that are now collaborating. Provision is influenced by funding regimes, different organisations collaborating and ways facilitators can be trained and have career development. People wishing to work with older people dancing need to be open to new ideas about the capabilities of older bodies and open minded about active older people's aspirations and their life experiences. Boundary spanning skills and activities will assist further development. (See 2.8.3 and F12) but what is available and accessible for most active older people is still limited or non-existent. There is potential for more older people's dance in the future.

### **Eliza**

I think one of the things you have to do is to get through to ... the teachers of dance ... that life doesn't stop at 18 or 22, or 25 ...and these young teachers ought to be encouraged when they're doing their professional teaching exams or whatever it is that they do these days they should be encouraged to consider teaching all age groups. They should be taught to teach everybody from 3 to 90 or 93. I don't know what the status is of dance teachers in terms of how they are taught or what they're taught but I hazard a guess that they are not taught that. They're not taught to consider older dancers who might like classes

### **NESTA Evaluation: Identifying ‘what works’ for local physical activity interventions**

This appendix gives the responses I made to feedback Vivacity received about their submission as part of the NCSEM Sports & Exercise Medicine - Sheffield and UK Active Research Institute’s research that had been commissioned by Public Health England.

The Feedback form is included and as can be seen Vivacity received a NESTA Level 2 rating and comments giving reasons for this.

It is suggested what should be done to reach level 3

Below are two emails I sent to the research team. They explain the importance of dance as an older people’s activity and the missed opportunities if small grassroots organisations have to collect unrealistic data. As will be seen, my research and learning is incorporated into the replies and this feedback informed my research concerning the way I thought that consideration was not given to grassroots organisations’ work and expectations were unrealistic (I thought lacked common sense). I consider this to be important because dance as can easily be disregarded.

#### **Emails I sent in response.**

##### **First email**

(sent 5 May 2015)

Hi xxxx

Thank you so much for sending the link to the report findings “What works” and congratulations for doing this important innovative research and setting new parameters.

Also, thanks for the evaluation feedback you sent about Vivacity, the small grassroots organisation I founded and manage in Tottenham. I was pleased that our organisation was rated emerging practice Level 2. For a small grassroots organisation that is pleasing.

I felt I had to comment on a few points and I hope you don’t mind. It is just to note the following:

- a) Dance is a very popular activity that now has a proven body of research that shows that especially women enjoy it and many want to do more. The benefits of

- dance are also being increasingly researched and so there is a growing body of quantitative and qualitative research being generated to show this is the case.
- b) "Dance" in any form is not included in the main text of your report other than in accorDANCE and guiDANCE Therefore, it is not getting the recognition as a physical/arts activity it deserves so is not being taken seriously. This is a potential loss and negates the role dance can play in getting people active. I do note that dancing is mentioned within the case studies but often as a small sub-set of their offer.
  - c) Grassroots organisations, such as mine, are small and organised by volunteers including all the work I do managing it. We have a paid sessional dance artist and have to pay for the venue. Active older people who attend do so because they develop their dance abilities and increasingly enjoy dancing and building friendships. I am sure there are lots of other similar small scale organisations like mine offering different sports and leisure activities. They have a growing role to play getting people to become more active, especially those who are hard to reach. E.g. at Vivacity we have a welcoming approach that builds trust and respect for all who attend regardless of background and we support one another.
  - d) I see no reason why I would collect intimate details about attendees such as measurements, waist sizes etc. This is not the reason people attend and it is time consuming and unnecessary. From my perspective it is not relevant or desirable.

My fear is that small grassroots organisations will lose out if only larger organisations get funding and can collect data that meets quantitative data outcomes. Surely, there are organisations e.g. universities partnering with your organisation to get the quantitative data required. Small organisations can provide qualitative data and narrative. If people are attending and want to do more, then they are being active and benefitting etc.

If you want to get people active, then small grassroots organisations can play an important part. They need to be able to partner with other organisations locally and get the resources to continue offering the popular offer that they are providing for people want to participate.

I am at the moment writing up a work-based doctorate on "Active Older People Participating in Creative Dance – Challenging Perceptions" and I hope to get it completed over the next few months. I am delighted to have become involved in a number of dance activities at local and national level over the last seven years since leaving my career at City & Guilds the awarding body. My biggest joy is that I have been able to introduce local active older people to creative dance. They come from different backgrounds and many are now keen older dancers. We welcome new people. They are participating in the local community and are actively engaged.

I just hope that, with Lord Filkin's "Centre for Better Ageing", advocating joined-up thinking there will be more links between different government departments, sectors and large and small organisations; so that older people (and all children and people of all ages) have choices and opportunities to get involved with activities that will benefit their lives and that are meaningful for them and provide



physical and mental wellbeing. My fear is that if small grassroots organisations cannot gain funding/ support/ joint working with others their potential contributions will be lost.

Thanks again for the information, and if you or any of your team are interested in the above, perhaps I could come in and see someone.

Best wishes

Jackie

I received a courteous reply and was told to consult a link about the research.

**Second email.**

(sent 29/5/2015)

Hi xxx

Thanks for getting back and it is much appreciated as I am sure you are very busy.

As time goes on things will change and there will be more recognition concerning the best ways to get people active, especially those who are the hardest to reach. Dance will most probably become more important and especially as there are going to be more people wanting to dance as well as more emphasis from government and others to get people moving regardless of what they do. However, just for the record. In the “identify what works for local physical inactivity interventions” report the only mention of dance in the main text is AttenDANCE and guiDANCE. However, your research is not alone the research that has just come out through CARDI in Ireland – keeping active in better ageing – encouraging physical activity in older adults is exactly the same! I hope you will be able to include dance as a topic and activity worthy of serious consideration in the future.

I suppose it shows how my work-based doctorate has explored an issue that needs further incorporation into mainstream thinking but it seems such a shame that dance is falling through the net and not being seen as a fundamental all round beneficial activity that people especially older women want to do.



Public Health  
England



## Submission Feedback

### Identifying 'what works' for local physical activity interventions

## Identifying 'what works' for local physical inactivity interventions Tailored feedback for Creative Dance 60+

Thank you for contributing to the 'identifying 'what works' for local physical inactivity interventions' process. This document provides feedback and tailored advice from the Academic Classification Board for your submission.

### Background

The All-Party Commission on Physical Activity suggested that "the UK lags behind other countries in evaluating the quality of physical activity interventions [therefore] we lack a coherent picture of what 'good' looks like". In response, Public Health England commissioned the National Centre for Sports & Exercise Medicine - Sheffield and ukactive Research Institute to undertake a process for 'identifying 'what works' for local physical inactivity interventions'.

This was one of the largest surveys of physical activity programmes ever conducted in England, with the physical activity community responding in numbers with an unprecedented 952 programme submitted. An objective, academic approach was undertaken. The Nesta Standards of Evidence were used by an academic classification board to assess the level of evidence submitted (i.e. not specifically the efficacy of the programme).

### Feedback from academic panel

The Creative Dance 60+ submission was rated: "Emerging practice" (Nesta level 2)

The panel recognised the following strengths in your submission to achieve this rating:

**You can describe what you do and why it matters, logically, coherently and convincingly:** Creative Dance 60+ provides support to inactive individuals to increase physical activity levels and social cohesion. The programme promotes creative dance activities, social cohesion and increases in wellbeing. The aim is to provide people from Tottenham who have not done any dance like this before, engaging individuals from different cultural backgrounds, the opportunity to take part in dance. You are able to articulate clear aims and objectives and provide a coherent rationale for the programme design.

**You have captured data that shows a positive change:** To reach Level 2 of the Nesta Standards of Evidence you are required to demonstrate that the programme is having a positive impact on the participants. This can be achieved by gathering data that shows some change amongst those participating in your programme. Data should extend beyond anecdotal evidence by considering such methods as pre and post data collection / survey evaluation or continual measurement. Qualitative (questionnaires and one-on-one interviews) measurements were used as appropriate methods to quantify the impact of the programme. Results demonstrate the positive impact of the programme on those taking part with self-reported increases in overall health and fitness including having better flexibility, balance and strength. Evidence also indicates improvements in social cohesion, memory and happiness.

### Recommendations for increasing the quality of your evidence:

**You can reach Nesta level 3 by considering the following practical guidance:** The strength of the evidence can be increased by collecting a comprehensive set of quantitative measurements. Measurements you could consider including are physical activity levels using accelerometers, waist circumference, BMI or strength, balance and flexibility tests. The quantitative nature of these types of measurements makes them a more objective and scientifically rigorous way of evidencing the impact of the programme in comparison to self-report measures. The evidence can also be strengthened by increasing the period of time over which these measurements are taken (i.e. measurements taken pre intervention, 12 weeks and 6 months) in order to demonstrate the longitudinal effect that the programme is having on the participants. To reach Level 3 of the Nesta Standards of Evidence you could consider including a control group in your evaluation which would allow the effect your scheme is having to be isolated. The control group could be formed using a waiting list whereby data is collected from all participants before they enter the programme (i.e. during a 12 week lead in period) that will act as a comparison for the participants actively receiving the intervention, a comparison with a neighbouring community that includes a representative sample of people or a competing intervention (i.e. individuals that receive additional counselling alongside the physical activities provided). Random selection of participants will strengthen the evidence at this level.

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## Some examples of quotes collected during my DProf journey

*"Creativity is contagious...  
Pass it on"* Albert Einstein

*And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took  
a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out  
after her with timbrels and with dances.  
Exodus 15:20*

If you don't know what Port you are  
sailing to,  
No wind is favourable".  
Seneca 'The Younger'  
Roman Philosopher 4BC-AD 65

## Adapt your strategy

... the advantage comes from the ability to adapt your strategy in real time as things emerge, staying focused on the goals rather than any preconceived notions of exactly how they will be achieved. More than ever, strategy formulation and execution are increasingly merged into one dynamic continuous process. This does not imply a purely opportunistic approach – you still have to set a direction and pursue various differentiators. But it does mean that you have to navigate in an adaptive way, recovering from unexpected setbacks and seizing unexpected opportunities as they arise.

R Thong

*"If I am not for myself, who will be for me?  
And if I am only for myself, who am I? And if  
not now, when?"*

*Hillel in Ethics of the Fathers, 1:14*

*"It is not what one says, but rather what one  
does, that makes a difference."*

*Ethics of the Fathers 1:17*

*Age is strictly a case of mind over  
matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't  
matter.*  
Jack Benny, New York Times (1974).

It is not enough for a great nation merely to have added new years to life—our objective must also be to add new life to those years. John F. Kennedy, special message to the Congress on the needs of the nation's senior citizens (February 21, 1963); in

Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy, 1963,

**"If you can't fly then run. If you can't run then walk. If you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward"** Martin Luther King Jr.

*The arts are a means by which we can investigate and understand the past and the present, our world and our feelings. We can do this by 'doing' it or by 'spectating' it or both. The wonder of libraries, museums and archives is that we can relate ourselves with others – often stretching back hundreds or thousands of years. This is one of the ways in which we can discover the history and shape of humanity and where or how we fit into it.*

Michael Rosen Broadcaster, children's author

Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance. Great dancers are great because of their passion."

— [Martha Graham](#)

# Telling incident 1

## Hospital experience

1 February 2010

I am feeling anxious, dressed in easy-to-put-on clothes, looking glum; sitting in front of the hospital doctor who I thought, by his attitude, must have been thinking t  
“poor darling, let’s go gently, she’s old and retired”

“Come back in three weeks’ time”

My arm, immobile following a recent fall, lays across my lap, uncomfortable and pathetic. My husband stands behind me - “what if she needs a plate fitted?”

The doctor hesitates. “Alright then, come back next week”

A week later, another doctor looks closely at my x-ray rather than me.

Silence. More scared than ever, I plead assertively, “Doctor I am dancing again after many years. I must try to get my full range of movement back.”

Silence. He continues to stare at my X-ray

“Doctor”, pleading again “I must get my movement back.”

More silence. He stares at me, smiling, “OK then, see our consultant.”

Half an hour later, I enter the consultant’s room hunched up with my left hand gripping my limp right arm.

“Mrs Richards, if you want your range of movement back you must come into hospital immediately”

Two days later, lying in a hospital bed with a platinum plate secured in my arm. I am full of gratitude. It will be up to my determination and exercising my shoulder joint to pull through. I have a chance, with physiotherapists’ expertise, I will dance again.

What would have happened if I had waited another three weeks and not been assertive?

Just another older lady becoming disabled and my passion for dance extinguished.

# Telling Incident 2

## **Collaboration and intergenerational empathy on The Tube**

An AAA creative arts group member directs an older people's campaigning choir "Bolder Voices". They were making a film about the London Freedom Pass.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9dg0fFxcYQ> More singers were needed for the final scene and some Vivacity dancers volunteered. This was an example of collaboration between small arts organisations in neighbouring boroughs. It was a chance for Vivacity to have an outing to the London South Bank. "Bolder Voices" appreciated our presence. Vivacity was included in the film credits so was promoted.

On the Tube home, we burst into the campaigning song like a flash-mob. Other passengers did not give distasteful glances of patronising horror, but listened, smiling. A young woman thanked us saying we had made her day as the Tube was miserable, she was now happy. Another said we made a change from rowdy football fans. There was positive talk about the Freedom pass. Intergenerational empathy!